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PRESIDENT HOOVER'S unemployment-relief program has at last been placed before the country. His plan proposes, in short, to do virtually everything in the way of relief except to extend federal aid to the unemployed. It would double the borrowing capacity of the Reconstruction Finance Corporation. The corporation would lend money to the States for "construction of income-producing or self-liquidating projects," which the New York *Evening Post,* conservative Republican paper, has already declared "is not going to meet the problem of the great cities in feeding the starving." Through the Farm Board and in other ways more money would be lent to the farmers, who are now so heavily in debt that they are growing desperate. Home-loan discount banks, for which building contractors and mortgage bankers have been agitating, would be organized to protect mortgage-holders and stimulate "construction work in new homes." But why new homes when the working people cannot pay for the homes they have now? Lastly, the Reconstruction Corporation would be permitted to lend $300,000,000 to "such States as are unable to finance themselves for distress." But how much real help will this small sum provide for the 12,000,000 jobless who are losing at the very least $12,000,000,000 annually in wages? Here Mr. Hoover is again dodging responsibility for unemployment relief. He is passing the burden on to the States. The major part of his relief plan is no better. The banker, the contractor, the material dealer, and everyone else concerned would take out his slice of the relief money before any of it got to the worker.

IT IS ONE OF THE PARADOXES of social psychology that a corporation deliberately formed for the purpose of making people confident does not have that effect to the extent that a much smaller corporation does which is not primarily intended to make other people confident but merely to take advantage of their lack of confidence. In announcing the formation of a $100,000,000 corporation by twenty leading New York banks for the purpose of buying bonds, Thomas W. Lamont of J. P. Morgan and Company made it clear that the corporation did not pretend to be engaged in any attempt to "stabilize" the bond market or to "rescue" it, but simply wanted to take advantage of present low security prices to make a profit for its participants. This mere announcement brought an advance in bond prices of 10 to 20 points and more in a few days. For the bankers to tell the public that it is foolish to let go of bonds of the great corporations at a half or a quarter of their value does not prevent them from doing it; for the bankers finally to indicate that they are going to use their own funds to pick up the bonds at these figures for their own profit makes the public want the bonds back again. The incident illustrates the difference between official confidence and personal confidence.

"I DO NOT BELIEVE that we can do anything really fundamentally constructive, however, unless we maintain intact our political order, which rests upon the effective functioning of the bi-party system." Thus spoke Owen D. Young on May 22. Now he has some other thoughts, which he expressed at the Commencement exercises of Notre Dame University. He declared that the cry coming from the people of the country for a leader could not be answered, "for there is no such somebody to do something promptly." Why? Well, in Mr. Young's opinion it is due not so much to the lack of potential leaders as to "the absence of integrated responsibility in this highly specialized world of ours." "It may be," he added, "that we shall have to consider some method of putting extraordinary powers in the hands of the President at times like these." How this comports with the idea that we should "maintain intact our political order" we cannot see. Probably that is our fault. We note, however, that Mr. Young has now joined the hue and cry for a "strong man"—strengthened by undemocratic and unrepublican concentration of power in his hands—because we are in a jam. This will greatly stimulate the growing fascist movement in this country and the talk of a national Cabinet. But can Mr. Young honestly assert that the President's position is due to the failure of Congress to give him anything that he has asked? Everything that Mr. Hoover has demanded he has received. Why should he receive more dictatorial powers?

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THERE CAN BE NO QUESTION that most of the recent heavy resumption of gold exports from the United States has been the result of a lack of confidence in Europe in the stability of the dollar. What is really creating that lack of confidence is not our unbalanced budget but the unsound inflationary proposals emanating even from persons usually regarded as responsible. Probably what stands out larger in the mind of financial Europe than any other recent development here is the proposal by Senator Glass, unanimously reported out by the Senate Banking and Currency Committee, to make all government bonds eligible as a basis for currency issues. Senator Glass estimates that this would permit about $1,108,000,000 of such new currency to be issued. There is not the slightest excuse for adopting this measure. There is, to begin with, no shortage whatever of currency as such; the Federal Reserve notes provide an elastic currency that prevents such a shortage, and the recent Glass-Steagall measure even reduced the gold basis previously required for such notes. If the new bond-secured notes came into circulation on a large scale they would simply drive out an equivalent amount of Federal Reserve notes. This would be a retrograde step. The Federal Reserve Act was in large part the culmination of years of effort to get rid of the dangerous and inelastic bond-secured national-bank currency. The new bill cannot possibly do any good, but by undermining confidence it can do a great deal of harm. Even its sponsor repudiates it: "I distinctly disavow the belief," says Senator Glass, "that any of these legislative devices is necessary at this time. I simply offered the bill in question as a substitute for the Goldsborough bill, which I regard with the utmost aversion." It is a new theory of legislation that the only way to defeat a thoroughly bad bill is to introduce another thoroughly bad bill.

A SPECTACULAR WAY of dramatizing the need for relief has been chosen by several groups of down-and-out war veterans. They are marching upon Washington from every section of the country. More than 2,500 have already assembled in the national capital, with additional thousands coming on freight trains, motor trucks, and on foot. They want their adjusted-compensation certificates—more commonly called the bonus—paid forthwith in cash. Here, of course, is trouble in the making. Thus far the veterans have shown excellent discipline, but there is no telling what they might do, to what heights their desperation might reach, if the police elected to use force in attempting to rid Washington of their presence. It was inevitable that the police should discover a deep-laid Communist plot in the march on Washington. Doubtless some of the veterans are radicals; men in their plight could hardly be anything else. It is also very likely true that the Communists, ever alert to take advantage of popular unrest, are now seeking to take charge of the demonstration. But the march itself has all the earmarks of spontaneous origin. It was quite clearly inspired by hunger, not by radical propaganda. "Alfalfa Bill" Murray, Governor of Oklahoma, has suggested that other "hungry folks" may soon be joining in the march on Washington; and so they may, for desperate people do not stay quiet forever. But they will come demanding, not bonuses, to which we are opposed, but honest relief, to which we believe they are entitled.

JULES SAUERWEIN, the French journalist, known for his competence as a political observer and also for his conservatism and moderation, can surely not be classed as an alarmist. He has come to the United States to report on political and economic developments for a number of French newspapers. He feels, he said upon his arrival, that what may happen here in the next few months is of "tremendous importance to the future of the world," for he sees Europe rapidly slipping. "I am almost tempted to say," he added, "that the misfortunes threatening Europe are worse than war. . . . It is perhaps not too late, but every day, every week, must be used. In a few months it would be too late to save Europe." Here again we have that note of alarm that many conservative and sober Europeans have lately been sounding. These earnest observers are not crying out simply to amuse themselves. Their words accurately reflect the extreme gravity of the European situation. Nor need the United States deceive itself into believing that it could by some miracle escape Europe's fate, if the worst came to the worst. "Today no country can save itself by national solutions," Sauerwein all too truthfully asserted, "even when a nation is so great and powerful as the United States." Can it any longer be contended that national isolation will protect this country from Europe's collapse?

ON THE LAST DAY of its session the Supreme Court of the United States heard Walter N. Pollak plead the case for a rehearing in the trial of the seven Negro boys convicted in Scottsboro, Alabama, of the rape of two white women. The case will be reviewed on November 10. The plea for reversal of the conviction has been on the ground of failure of the due-process-of-law provision of the Constitution. At the original trial a crowd outside the courtroom shouting "Dixie" and the "Star-spangled Banner," failure of defense counsel to sum up for the defendants, refusal of the trial judge to permit a change of venue, and an undue atmosphere of sympathy for the white women which must have had its effect on the jury are held to provide ample evidence that the due-process provision was not fulfilled, and that with the precedent of the Arkansas riot cases to go on, a new trial should be ordered. The Supreme Court of Alabama decided otherwise, but there is hope now that the case is in the hands of the court of last resort in Washington. The execution of the seven boys, set for June 24, is automatically stayed. One can heartily hope that it will never take place. The spectacle of seven helpless Negroes hardly more than children in years and certainly no more in responsibility being sent to the electric chair for a crime which there is no reputable evidence that they committed is not one to increase respect for our courts at home or abroad.

A SOCIALIST REPUBLIC has been proclaimed in Chile by a revolutionary junta led by Carlos Davila, former Chilean ambassador in Washington. According to a manifesto issued by Davila, big business and the large estates are to be "liquidated," and the new government is to organize corporations for the purpose of operating the major industries. Even the church's power is to be challenged and all religious organizations are to be dissolved. We sincerely hope that the socialism which is put into practice—if Davila and his associates remain in power—is as pure as the socialism contained in the revolutionary manifesto.

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But we have our doubts. The revolution was neither a class nor to all appearances a popular movement. It was supported by the army and navy and succeeded only because of that support. In Japan a somewhat similar movement has developed, though it has not yet come into complete control of the governmental machinery. The leaders of the Japanese movement are demanding socialization or nationalization of industry, and they, like Davila and his colleagues, are supported by the military. But in Japan this is called fascism, not socialism. Nevertheless, for the sake of Chile, if for no other reason, we are hoping for the best. It is high time that someone in Chile sought to restore to the people some measure of control over their natural resources and national economy, whether or not that attempt results in the creation of a genuinely socialistic republic.

ADMIRAL SAITO, the new Premier of Japan, has declared in one of his first official statements that "no danger of war with the Soviet Union exists." We feel, too, that the probability of war between the Japanese and Russians has been overemphasized by some of our journalists and jingoists. True, the situation in Manchuria could very easily lead to an outbreak of hostilities; there has been a massing of troops on both sides of the Manchurian-Siberian border, and history shows what consequences an apparently innocent "border incident" can have. But it is also true that unless one country or the other really intends to fight, such incidents rarely result in war. Domestic circumstances make it virtually impossible for the Soviet Union to undertake an offensive war. Japan likewise must hesitate. It has bitten off in Manchuria as much as—and probably more than—it can chew. It lacks both the financial and political support it must have to prosecute a successful war. We have by no means forgotten Formosa, Korea, Shantung, Manchuria, and Shanghai. Nevertheless, we must recognize that the known political and economic factors in the Far Eastern situation point away from war at this time. This situation might change; Japan might find the political allies and the financial support it must have. But there is little possibility that this will come about.

THE CATHEDRAL OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE has just lost a conditional bequest of $937,500 because of the fact that the Right Reverend William T. Manning is still alive. Miss Laura Shannon provided in her will that the money should go to St. Luke's Hospital instead if the Bishop survived her, and a man of his well-known social conscience must be wondering whether or not he is worth quite that much. After all, the world needs nothing more than it needs a cathedral, and the $937,500 would have gone a long way toward completing that structure. What with the budget going wrong, industry lagging, and starvation instead of prosperity just around the corner, it is hard to face the fact that we have just been deprived of a couple of Gothic arches and two or three stained-glass windows. Of course it is too late for the Bishop to do anything now; even suicide would not divert the money from the hospital to the cathedral. But can it be that he is wondering just how many other rich ladies are fearing that he may not die before them? The responsibility is awful. Does he remember that Jonathan Edwards decided that he was willing to be damned for the glory of God? Can a bishop do less?

Figures Do Lie

SECRETARY MILLS, in reports on the Wagner relief bill and the Garner relief bill, took the usual Administration exception to direct federal relief for the unemployed. In the course of his two reports the Secretary of the Treasury took as his motif balancing the budget.

In this connection it is interesting to note certain figures compiled, after consultation with statistics of the Treasury Department, by two members of the staff of the Baltimore *Sun*. Dexter M. Keezer, writing in the *Sun* of May 27, declared that Secretary Mills's estimate of probable federal revenue was over-optimistic to the amount of at least $700,000,000. Eighty million dollars of this is customs receipts which "cannot be anticipated without assuming a sharp upturn in imports"; $45,000,000 is in miscellaneous internal revenue, based on the assumption that tax yields for next year will equal those for the current year; $167,000,000 is in individual and corporate taxes and back taxes, estimates for which were drawn up before tax returns on incomes for the calendar year 1931 had been filed on March 15; and $200,000,000 is in war-debt payments which nobody seriously believes will be paid. These figures were brought to the notice of Secretary Mills. His answer to them was hardly convincing. He admitted that conditions had changed since the February estimates, on which the present consideration of federal financing is based, but he added that "we cannot undertake to revise our estimates every month or so." In the face of such an inconclusive and one might almost say irresponsible answer to an honest challenge of Treasury estimates, Mr. Mills's insistence on the necessity of balancing the budget—when the budget is based on his figures—seems to be meaningless.

Nor do the Baltimore *Sun's* figures offer the only challenge to the Secretary of the Treasury's estimates or point of view. In his report on the Wagner bill on June 2 Mr. Mills, in opposing Senator Wagner's proposal for an emergency fund of half a billion dollars for public works, repeats the erroneous figures used by Mr. Hoover to demonstrate how little help to the unemployed would be provided by such proposals. "The expenditure of $120,000,000 for road-building purposes," said Mr. Mills, "would give employment directly to but 33,193 men." But as *The Nation* pointed out last week, Colonel F. S. Greene, Superintendent of Public Works of the State of New York, offered figures which prove that $132,000,000 would have employed 148,500 under the prices prevalent last winter; now estimates show by bids that the same sum would employ 169,450 men. Secretary Mills has two other objections to public-works programs. He does not believe that bonds issued for such purposes would be salable—although government bonds yielding only 4 per cent are now selling at a premium. And he believes that the "distance of the federal government from the average citizen" would offer shocking possibilities of "waste, favoritism, maladministration" if the federal government were to go "into the field of private charity."

It is evident that the insistence of the Treasury upon the vital need for a balanced budget is pure politics. The figures do not matter; the main thing is to say the budget is balanced—and to disparage direct federal relief.

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A Red-Herring Conference

THE mental processes of the Administration in the face of the greatest world economic crisis in a century become daily more bewildering. Secretary Stimson announces that the United States has "accepted" the proposal for an international conference "for the purpose of considering methods of stabilizing world commodity prices," but that such a conference is to have "nothing to do with war debts, reparations, disarmament, or any other than purely economic subjects." Mr. Stimson was later to indicate emphatically that tariffs would not be included either. We doubt that even Lewis Carroll could have imagined a more amazing proposal. It is exactly as if Mr. Stimson should agree to a naval disarmament conference but refuse to permit any discussion of battleships, cruisers, or submarines, "or any other than purely naval subjects."

What is left for such a conference? Mr. Stimson intimates that it can discuss currency and credit, foreign exchange, the gold standard, silver, and other questions. From what point of view will it discuss them, and toward what policy would it aim? We may dismiss the aim to "stabilize" world prices as essentially an evasion. Neither the representatives of the United States nor those of any other nation would want to stabilize world wholesale prices at their present panic levels. They want to raise them. And they would prefer to raise them, if possible, to at least their 1926 levels. But we hope no one is seriously planning to turn the absurd Goldsborough bill into an international document, and have the conference adjourn with some such hollow declaration as "It is hereby declared to be the policy of the signatory nations to restore the prices of 1926." It would be just as useful and practical for them to declare themselves in favor of the millennium. World prices cannot be restored unless something is done to restore them. It cannot be repeated too often that the wholesale price level in any country on a gold basis must reflect the world gold price level. A mere glance at the various present national price levels should make this obvious. These price levels have not only all moved in the same direction, but to almost precisely the same extent. In March, 1932, average wholesale prices in the United States stood at 66 per cent of their 1926 level, in France at 64 per cent, in Canada at 69 per cent, in Great Britain at 71 per cent, in Sweden at 72 per cent, in Germany at 74 per cent. As the world price level is a gold price level, it can only be changed by changing the standard. The international discussion of anything less than this would be meaningless. What plan have Messrs. Hoover and Stimson in mind in this connection? Are they willing to discuss an international devaluation of currencies, an approximately equal reduction in the gold content of the dollar, the franc, the gold pound, the gold krone, the mark? Do they recognize how enormously serious such a discussion would be? What do they imagine would happen to the dollar and other currencies of the world while such a discussion was in progress? There would be an immediate raid on the national gold reserves of every country participating in the conference, a raid which no country could withstand. No free discussion of such questions would be possible unless every nation suspended specie payments—that is, temporarily abandoned the gold basis—before going into the conference. This would probably be true also if the question of silver were discussed. The only move at all likely to "restore" silver would be international bimetalism at an absurd legal ratio in favor of silver; this would mean a degradation of the currency, and the effect of its serious discussion—which we do not believe possible—would be similar raids on national gold reserves unless specie payments were abandoned.

The Nation believes that the time has arrived when serious consideration may have to be given to the question of currency devaluation, and if this step has to be taken, there are weighty reasons why it would be better for it to be done internationally rather than by the United States acting alone. But devaluation, while it would have effects of the first importance, would not touch the immediate causes for the world crisis. Those causes lie in reparations, war debts, and tariffs, and if the problem of devaluation were approached before these questions were satisfactorily settled, it would give no hope of permanent revival and would probably do far more to undermine confidence further than to restore it. Yet urgent as the need for lower tariffs and the drastic reduction or complete cancelation of reparations and war debts is, we do not feel that the tariff, at least, is a subject that can be dealt with in an international conference. The world's tariff structures are at once too arbitrary and too complex to permit any possible basis for bargaining or exchange. There is no reason why a nation with an average tariff of 10 per cent should be asked to reduce it by the same percentage as a nation with one averaging 100 per cent; nor is it easy to see how the 3,300 items in the tariff of the United States, for example, could be adjusted in such a conference, even assuming that Congress were willing to surrender its prerogatives in that respect. More progress could be made in such a conference on the question of the war debts, but a simple declaration by the American government could settle that question if the will existed here to make that declaration. It did not require an international conference to make the Hoover moratorium effective, and it would not require one for a further moratorium or for a complete cancelation of war debts and reparations.

It has now become obvious that the Administration is determined to return only a stony stare to the slightest suggestion that it deal with any of the real causes of the current depression. For that reason any international conference that its representatives enter is certain to be abortive. But this does not mean that it is certain to be harmless. On the contrary, it will be sure to arouse false hopes in the masses, which—perhaps in this respect not unlike Messrs. Hoover and Stimson themselves—will vaguely expect such a conference somehow to pull a rabbit out of the hat. For those in power in every country it will be, as previous world conferences have been, the great excuse for complete inaction. They will be able to point out for months that nothing can be done until the conference meets, and after it fails the statesmen in each country will, as in the past, put the blame on the statesmen of all the others.

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The German Peril

LONDON and other European capitals were reported to have registered "blank amazement" when it was announced that Lieutenant Colonel Franz von Papen had been appointed German Chancellor. Officials in Washington called the appointment "incredible." Their astonishment is justified. That President Hindenburg should have chosen Von Papen to succeed a man as moderate, sincere, and sane as Heinrich Brüning appears to us simply inexplicable. Von Papen is virtually everything that a German Chancellor of today should not be. He is personally ambitious. In accepting the appointment, he flouted the will of his party, the Catholic Center, which has since expelled him. It is said of him that he knows his government will be short-lived, that he cares only for the personal distinction, if it can be called that, which will come to him as a former Chancellor. Must the fate of Germany and indeed of all Europe depend in these critical hours upon a man so superficial, so empty? But Von Papen is more than ambitious. He is reactionary to an alarming degree and militaristic to the core. In his Cabinet he has surrounded himself with representatives of the reactionary element of the old Germany, with men of Junker sympathies, with friends of heavy industry, with outspoken nationalists, with remnants of the former titled aristocracy, with militarists like himself. There is in the new Government not a single spokesman of the moderates and liberals, not a single representative of labor, of the still powerful trade unions. It appears to be imperial Germany in power again.

Just there lies the peril to the stability of Germany and hence to the peace of Europe. Despite the fascist reaction, the results of recent elections show the moderates, Socialists, and Communists still in the majority. These groups cannot be ignored, and events may well show that they will not be ignored. Von Papen's Government is not only militaristic and reactionary, but definitely a minority government. It has been said that the new Cabinet is meant to be only a stop-gap arrangement, to mark time pending new elections. But it will be in power during these next fateful weeks. It will have to send delegates to the Lausanne conference and probably also to the prospective economic conference to be held in London. Just how are the other Powers to deal with these delegates? Or are the Powers to risk postponing the reparations debate once again in order to deal with representatives of a more permanent German Government? But that course is also dangerous; the economic situation may not wait so long. And even if the Powers were to delay action until after the German elections, what guaranty have they that the successors to Von Papen will not be equally reactionary and militaristic? The chances are that the Hitlerites will then come into power. What their ascendancy will bring only time can tell. Until then—and many things can happen before the elections are held—Europe must do business with the Von Papen Government. The fall of Brüning was ominous enough. The rise of Von Papen has made matters worse. Military reaction has now definitely raised its ugly, menacing head in Germany. Can it be suppressed by parliamentary or democratic methods?

First Down for Yale

CREDIT for the most damaging advance yet made against big-business football in the colleges must go to Yale University, which, in a report of a special committee appointed by President Angell, has announced a radical change in its athletic system. For two decades there has been a movement in many institutions toward the democratization of sport, with greater emphasis on intramural competition. Sporadic efforts have been made to encourage, by one device or another, spontaneous play on the part of the entire student body. But Yale's new plan for the future will, if carried through as projected by the committee, bring about a veritable transformation.

Urging that sports budgets be drastically pruned, the committee which drew up the new program took vigorous exception to recent policy, declaring that "the tremendous cost of athletics at Yale, as well as at all other universities, is the outgrowth of the nation-wide wave of post-war extravagance." As the Yale *Alumni Weekly* points out, receipts from all sports in 1912-13 amounted to only $132,705, whereas last year the gross income from football alone was $1,140,568. Expenditures have been boosted so high that the committee has been forced to figure out ways in which the Athletic Association's debt can be liquidated by 1935. The retrenchment, however, is not merely financial. The committee desires also to deflate the present football ballyhoo. It would have only five games instead of eight or nine a season played against competing varsity teams; scouting would be abolished; gone would be the separate training tables at which contestants have been groomed with a coddling usually reserved for prima donnas and race horses; pre-season practice would be no more; the 150-pound football team would be eliminated; prices on alumni tickets would be reduced and tickets issued free to undergraduates; and the salaried football coach would become a sad relic of past glory. This is no mere taking away of privileges; rather, Yale wisely is planning to tie the new system in with its scheme for ten residential colleges, developing group rivalry, stimulating student initiative, providing more time free from class work in the afternoons, emphasizing recreation for the many, and doubling the use of available equipment.

Alumni opinion is of course divided, but the defense of the good old days appears less robust than might have been expected. There is a strong current of student protest. Three members of this year's varsity, headed by the renowned "Albie" Booth, have joined with Coach Stevens in deploring the exposure of first-team men to the grave risk of lost games. They assert that Yale teams "have been winning teams for sixty years," and they bespeak tender solicitude for a "splendid record" and a "noble heritage." The Yale *Daily News* fears "the complete obliteration of Yale's athletic traditions." The Harvard *Crimson* and the *Daily Dartmouth,* on the other hand, support the Yale committee's proposals, an approval which, we fear, may not be construed by all Yale fans as entirely disinterested. The entire faculty world of America will be heartily grateful if this Yale proposal is adopted by the university authorities and proves the practicability of reducing athletics to their proper position in academic life.

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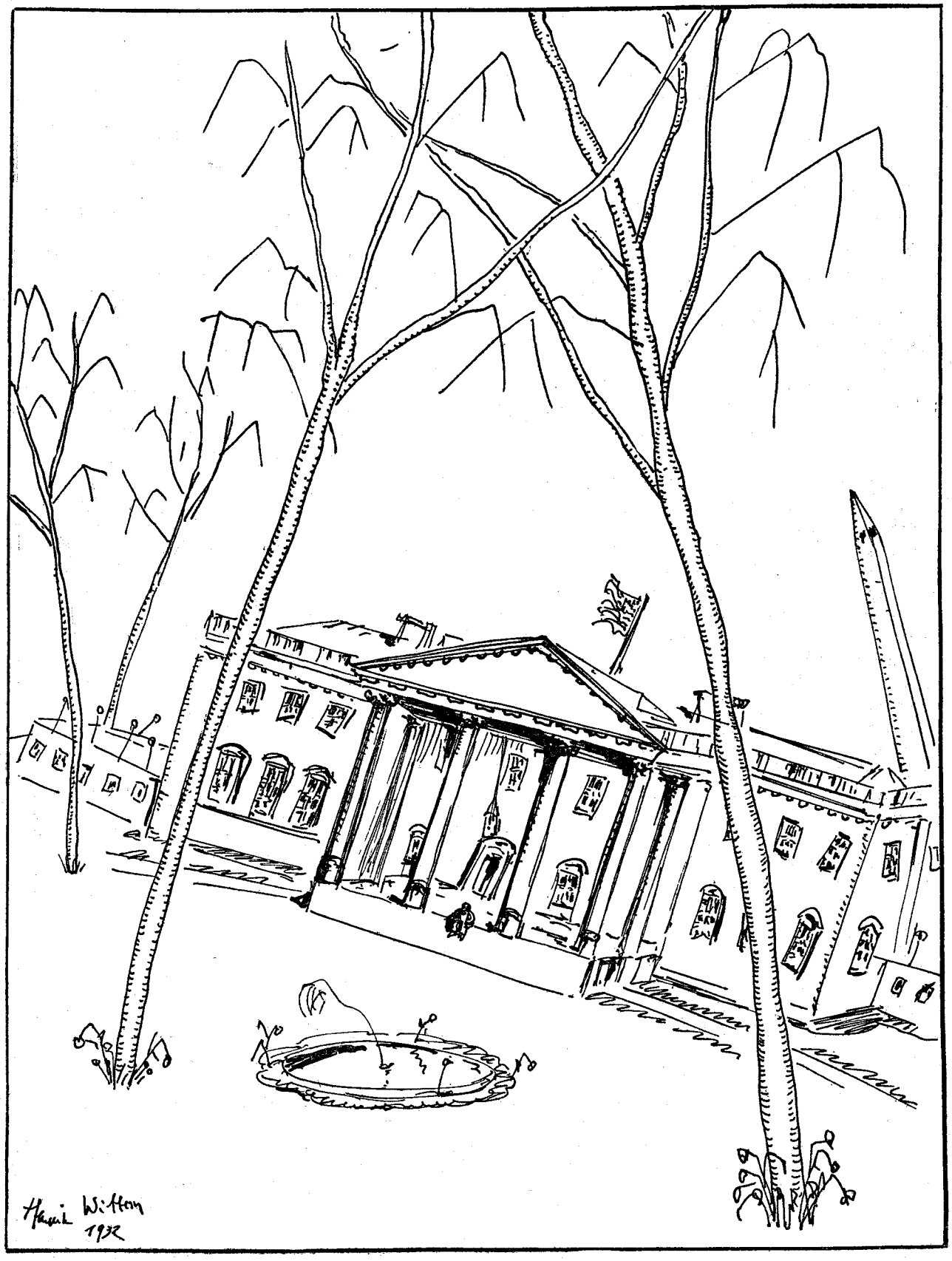

All Alone in a Cock-eyed World!

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Pity Herbert Hoover

By OSWALD GARRISON VILLARD

MOST of Herbert Hoover's defenders have adopted the philosophy of the familiar story of the pianist who was not to be shot because he was doing his best. "Don't criticize him," they say; "he is not responsible for our economic disaster and he is doing his best. Don't blame him. Pity him." Pity him? Of course. Who would not pity the man who, after toiling for years to achieve the greatest office in the gift of his fellow-citizens, finds himself confronted by a situation beyond his intelligence to comprehend, his ability to master, his power to lead? Pity the man who, certain that his philosophy of life is correct, finds it utterly inadequate to the hour. Pity the man who pledged himself to abolish poverty as the sole remaining problem before the American people—only to find millions upon millions robbed of their all and reduced to soup kitchens and bread lines during his Presidency. Pity the man convinced of the perfection of a system of economics who sees it crashing before his eyes; who, with tremendous influence to wield, finds himself unable to rescue it. Pity the man who lets I dare not wait upon I would; who again and again consenting does that which he swore he ne'er, ne'er would do. Pity the man who desiring above all else to be praised and beloved finds himself with scarcely a true friend to defend him.

Sometimes one wonders why this man so ardently desires reelection. "I don't know any man in the world whom I envy less than the Prime Minister," Lord Derby once said. One would think Mr. Hoover would thank his lucky stars if he could gracefully and honorably turn over to someone else the dreadful task that is his. But nobody who has ever experienced such power lays it down willingly. There is the increasing urge not to admit defeat; to show those rascals, one's opponents, that after all they are wrong and he is right. There is the thirst for vindication; the desire for four normal years to show how one can steer the ship of state over smooth seas. There is the consuming urge to be one of the two-term Presidents, to rank with Washington and Lincoln, Cleveland, McKinley—a desire which made Woodrow Wilson forget that he had solemnly accepted the Baltimore platform with its pledge of single-term Presidents only. There is the belief that one's own ego alone can cope with the crisis; the conviction, easily arrived at, that it would be unpatriotic and cowardly not to hold on come what may; there is the desperate effort to bolster up the social order one declared so perfect. And so one demands renomination —four more years without rest, without privacy, without cessation of toil, without release from the frightening responsibility, without—so the incumbent usually says—appreciation, gratitude, adequate reward.

Yet the simple fact is that Mr. Hoover has been a failure by every test that fairness and non-partisanship can apply. He has failed for lack of vision, failed for lack of sympathy, failed for lack of understanding, failed by reason of his prejudices—political, economic and social—but most of all he has failed in leadership. If it is true that where there is no vision the people perish, the same must hold true in the case of an individual. The fatal thing is that Mr. Hoover has had and could have no vision of a better and nobler America and a juster world. Again and again he has made it plain that what he calls "the American system" precisely fulfils his dreams, his aspirations. He admits that there are some flaws, but he dwells upon the superiority of our democracy to the British, German, or French democracy because of the equality of opportunity which he says the United States offers. But that equality of opportunity means for him the right of some men to rise to wealth and power and privilege upon the backs of most of their fellow-citizens. He snorts at the idea that there may be a better system, a better way of life for Americans. Are we not richer and smarter, have we not scaled greater heights of prosperity than any other people in all history? Ever and again he comes back to the question of wealth. His is a materialistic god. I know he has dwelt upon the desirability of the spiritual side of life; has he not touched the religious note since he returned to Quaker worship after discovering that one could not be a candidate for the Presidency without church affiliation? But no one can write and talk as incessantly as Herbert Hoover has since 1919 without sounding all notes. What counts is what this man's real credo is. What does he want his country to be?

It is perfectly obvious that all he wanted is the kind of America that we had up to the time of the crisis. Witness his berserker rage at anyone who has suggested a world without private profit. Witness the speech that he made when he came back from the Peace Conference in 1919. Europe was being held together by the Socialists—the Socialist governments of Italy and Germany and Russia and other countries. But Herbert Hoover could only say: "My conclusion is that socialism as a philosophy of human application has already bankrupted itself. It has proved itself, with rivers of blood and suffering, to be an economic and spiritual fallacy." Just as if it had not been capitalistic governments that together produced the world's greatest catastrophe, the World War, from the end of which he had just returned. That was the text of his speech. Was it an impassioned plea for a new society to be built upon the wreckage of the World War? Was it a demand that the world forever renounce the instruments of war? Was it a moving and touching plea that hereafter the disadvantaged of the world be given a better, a more generous share of the world's riches? No, indeed; it was just a fulmination against doctrines which might have put an end to the capitalistic exploitation of backward nations, of the God-given natural resources of backward peoples, in which he had had a share all through his mining-stock career.

Why should anyone have expected that when this man became President of the United States we should have an inspired leader pledged and certain to lead us to greater spiritual and moral heights than the American people had ever scaled? Those heights have not existed for him. I repeat that what he wanted was more and better and bigger opportunities for the rich men to inherit the earth. Now that might have gone very well had times continued as they

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were in the pleasant plunderbund years of Harding and Coolidge, with the latter urging everybody to get into the swinish trough of wild speculation, the unlimited gorging of the herd desire to get rich overnight without giving any service therefor. But those were years completely deceiving to most Americans, and especially to Herbert Hoover, who saw no dangers ahead in 1928, as witness his Inaugural. If he had ever read certain words of John Bright, he paid no attention to them. They read thus: "I am of the opinion that the rich people of the country, invested with power, and speaking generally for rich people alone, cannot sufficiently care for the multitude and the poor. . . . It is a long distance from castles and mansions and great houses and abounding luxuries to the condition of the great masses of the people who have no property, and too many of whom are always on the verge of poverty. . . . The rich find everything just as they like. The country needs no reform. There is no other country in the world so pleasant for rich people as this country." The truth is that the rich people of the United States and Herbert Hoover, their leader, vested with all the power, and speaking generally for the rich people alone, have not been able sufficiently to care for the multitude and the poor. That has been proved by the events since October, 1929, the stormy years for which Mr. Hoover's philosophy and talents were so inadequate.

Mr. Hoover has failed us in this crisis because he has been so far removed from the American multitude and the poor that he has not been able since this crisis began to voice any genuinely moving expression of regret for the plight the country is in; for the terrible suffering which during his Presidency has come upon the land; for the fact that millions of Americans facing starvation have lost hope and faith and belief in their own institutions, as well as in the men in high places who have let us come to this pass. This terrible disillusionment is not to be exaggerated, but the President cannot understand it. He remains aloof from the suffering people, partly because of temperament, partly because of his own earlier career, probably partly because of lack of imagination. It is his misfortune that he has shown little sense of social justice; that he has been so unable to express sympathy or tenderness, to make people understand that his heart is wrung, not by the plight of the banks or the railroads or the great corporations, not by the quotations of the Stock Exchange, but by the unlimited misery of masses of our people in a crisis which, if it continues another year, will profoundly affect the lives of every one of us. It is his misfortune that the major part of his active life was lived outside of the country, working with laborers among backward peoples whom he despised—despised because of their color, their race, their lowliness, because they were not so far along the scale of life as he with his Anglo-Saxon blood. Coolies, Kafirs, Negroes, why talk of social justice for them? Why be concerned with the masses of individual Americans when the quickest way to help them is to help the corporations which employ them, to see that the railroads and the steel companies and the banks and the mining corporations are kept above water so that they may have the wherewithal to pay wages?

Is it really surprising that this man has set his face like flint against the federal government's giving one cent to starving Americans; that he has insisted that the American way was to unload the responsibility for their living or starving upon private charity? Rugged individualism and the right to starve while standing on one's own feet he is still unalterably pledged to, and will be for another few months until the situation becomes too grave, and the twelve millions of unemployed too desperate. But what the President of the United States does not know is that he stands today exactly where stood the Pope of Rome in 1878-79. In an encyclical issued then the Pope said: "The solution to all the evils for which socialism seeks a revolutionary remedy is reconciliation to the church, which *by ordaining almsgiving of the rich* corrects the poverty of which socialism is so impatient, and thus reconciles the poor to the wealthy." Mr. Hoover, too, has ordained almsgiving of the rich to correct the poverty of which socialism is still so impatient, in the hope of thus reconciling the poor not only to the wealthy, but to the grinding misery of their lot today, plus the absence of any hope, any security, for the future.

We needed a man of Lincoln-like understanding of the masses and their problems and their crying needs. Instead, we have a President who could not tell us the truth when the storm burst upon us, either because he did not know it, or because he was bent upon misleading us to the benefit of the broken-down system that he upholds. Doubtless he was sincere in his adoption of the Dr. Coué chant that every day if you say things are going to be better they will become so; in his belief that the way to keep up the morale of virile Americans was to deceive them as to what was actually coming to pass. My own theory is that he did not know. I think he is a dull, ignorant, and superficial man, as well as one who does not let his own passionate nature interpret for him the deep feelings of others so far less favorably placed than himself. Curiously enough, for one whose life has been supposedly so practical and so realistic, he seems to be without sense of actuality. Dreamers and visionaries are the ones who are supposed to live beyond the realm of actuality, but this man strikes me as being constantly detached and apart from the actualities of things because of the very intensity of his desire to mold things as he would have them, and again because he is out of touch with the multitude and the poor. How could a really bright man or even a clever politician make himself again and again as ridiculous as he did in the early days of the depression, as when he said on March 5, 1930, that the unemployment situation would be "greatly remedied in the next sixty days"? A bright man does not make needless prophecies, especially when they are based on error. A bright man would never have stated to the delegation that called upon him on June 4, 1930, to urge him to authorize a program of immediate expenditure for federal road construction and other public works, that all was going well, that we were drifting back to complete prosperity. "Gentlemen," he said to the delegation, "you have come six weeks too late." That was just two years ago. Yet he admitted to the Senate on May 31, 1932, that the situation has been rapidly getting worse, that the country is now in grave financial danger, and that if certain things are not immediately done by Congress there will be tremendous additional losses for the American people and greater increase in unemployment, which he now concedes, just two years later almost to the day, has rapidly grown in these last few weeks of the spring of 1932.

Let us grant that he has done some good things, whether on his own or because he has been pushed into them by

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bankers or politicians—the Hoover moratorium, the Reconstruction Finance Corporation, and other things; usually they have come too late. Today the demand of the committee which called on him on June 4, 1930, is being echoed on all sides. It is actively urged in Congress by Democratic leaders. The mayors of twenty-eight leading cities assembled in Detroit have just called upon the President, not for the moderate public-works program the committee of 1930 demanded, but for a $5,000,000,000 prosperity loan to avert disaster. Two years gone; two precious years lost; and not because of Congress! The chorus of attacks upon that hard-pressed and sorely tried institution, facing almost impossible tasks and overwhelmed by an unparalleled confusion of counsel, cannot conceal the fact that Congress *has* acted in this matter. Who vetoed the Wagner bill of 1931? Who threw his influence against the enactment of the extremely moderate Costigan-La Follette measure? Why, a dull man in the White House who still is absolutely unable to grasp the magnitude of the calamity and its far-reaching implications, as he has been unable to understand the part that the international situation has played and is playing in our misfortunes, and how much we have contributed to the international disaster by the folly of our attitude on debts and reparations and the crime of the Hawley-Smoot tariff.

Pity Mr. Hoover? Of course. He's pitiful. He's pathetic, but it is far more pathetic that our fortunes should be in his hands at this grave crisis which he says is worse than that of the war. Reelect him? I cannot imagine anything worse for the American electorate to do. The greatest kindness that could be done him would be to let him go back to the promotion of mines. But the time has really passed for any consideration of the man. *What is at stake is the country.* We shall have that so often misused simile of Abraham Lincoln's about not swapping horses when crossing the stream dinged into us from every platform in the coming campaign. But it isn't now a question of swapping horses in mid-stream, it's the question of getting hold of a steed that is strong enough, and able enough, and well-mannered enough to take us into the water and swim through the flood. Many a rider has been drowned because he didn't know how to handle a swimming horse. Our situation is too grave for us to trust to anyone in the saddle who does not know what a horse does when he is off the bottom and struggling for life.

Must we say we have no choice? Must we say that Hoover is inevitable? Everybody in the political world will admit that if the President did not have the unintended power to control the Presidential convention of his party, to own body and soul the Negro delegations in the South (by the aid of which William H. Taft defeated Theodore Roosevelt in the convention of 1912), Mr. Hoover would not have a chance. The leaders do not want him. The men in the various Republican camps do not like him. They suffer him ungladly. Yet they dare not speak out; they are bound by one of those hideous loyalties to a party that are doing so much to hurry us over the precipice. Europe is cracking. America is sliding faster and faster. And Herbert Hoover is the only one to save us? What an insult to America! What a counsel of despair! What faithlessness to the Republic!

Mr. Hoover: Prophet of Prosperity

JULY 27, 1928, in a speech at San Francisco:

> The outlook of the world today is for the greatest era of commercial expansion in history.

August 11, 1928, in a speech accepting the Republican nomination:

> Unemployment in the sense of distress is widely disappearing. . . . We in America today are nearer to the final triumph over poverty than ever before in the history of any land. The poorhouse is vanishing from among us. We have not yet reached the goal, but given a chance to go forward with the policies of the last eight years, and we shall soon with the help of God be within sight of the day when poverty will be banished from this nation.

September 17, 1928, in a speech at Newark, New Jersey:

> Were it not for *sound governmental policies and wise leadership,* employment conditions in America today would be similar to those existing in many other parts of the world.

October 6, 1928, in a speech at Elizabethton, Tennessee:

> As never before does the keeping of our economic machine in tune depend upon *wise policies in the administrative side of the government.*

October 22, 1928, in a speech at Madison Square Garden, New York City:

> A continuation of the policies of the Republican Party is fundamentally necessary to the future advancement of this progress and to the further building up of this prosperity.

November 3, 1928, in a speech at St. Louis, Missouri:

> The standard of living among our workers of our city populations is the only standard in the world which permits them to purchase *all the food they can eat.*

November 3, 1928, in same speech:

> These [public] works, *which will provide jobs for an army of men,* should, so far as practicable, be adjusted to take up the slack of unemployment if it should occur.

October 25, 1929, in a statement to the press after the stock-market crash:

> The fundamental business of the country, that is, production and distribution of commodities, is on a sound and prosperous basis.

November 15, 1929, in another statement to the press:

> Any lack of confidence in the economic future or the *basic strength of business in the United States is foolish.*

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November 23, 1929, in a message to the governors of the several States, urging them to speed up public-building programs:

> The federal government will exert itself to the utmost within its own province.

December 3, 1929, in his annual message to the Congress of the United States:

> I am convinced that through these measures we have reestablished confidence. Wages should remain stable. A very large degree of industrial unemployment which would otherwise have occurred has been prevented. . . . *The test of the rightfulness of our decisions must be whether we have sustained and advanced . . . prosperity.*

January 21, 1930, a statement based on information from the Department of Labor:

> The tide of employment has changed in the right direction.

June 4, 1930, a statement to a group of bishops, bank presidents, manufacturers, and others, who had called on the President to urge him to act vigorously to prevent the spread of unemployment:

> Gentlemen, you have come six weeks too late.

October 2, 1930, in a speech before the American Bankers' Association, Cleveland, Ohio:

> We have had a severe shock and there has been disorganization in our economic system, which has temporarily checked the march of prosperity.

February 3, 1931, in a statement to the press:

> I would no more see starvation among our countrymen than would any Senator or Congressman. I have faith in the American people that such a day will not come.

May 30, 1931, in a speech at Valley Forge, Pennsylvania:

> The American people are going through another Valley Forge at this time.

June 19, 1931, a Washington dispatch to the New York *Times:*

> Another thing that pleased the President was a report covering the whole country which indicated that not a single bread line was now being maintained.

September 21, 1931, in a speech before the American Legion at Detroit:

> Our economic strength is such that we would have recovered long since but for these forces from abroad. Recovery of the world now rests and awaits in no small degree upon our country, the United States of America.

October 18, 1931, in a radio speech broadcast from Fortress Monroe, in "behalf of relief of the unemployed":

> No one with a spark of human sympathy can contemplate unmoved the possibilities of suffering that can crush many of our unfortunate fellow-Americans if we fail them.

May 6, 1932, in a statement to the press:

> This is a serious hour which demands that all elements of the government and the people rise with stern courage above partisanship to meet the needs of our national life.

May 22, 1932, in a letter to the president of the American Society of Civil Engineers:

> What you and I want is to restore normal employment. I am confident if the program I have proposed to Congress is expeditiously completed and we have the cooperation of the whole community, we will attain the objective *for which we have been searching so long.*

Harlan County: Act of God?

By J. C. BYARS, Jr.

FAMILIAR to all readers of pioneer American history is the name Cumberland Gap. Thousands of years ago the swift and beautiful Cumberland River chiseled its way through the Appalachian Mountains, preparing an easy route of passage for man across this once hazardous part of the American continent. Through Cumberland Gap poured one of the great streams of westward migration—a horde of pioneers who settled Kentucky, Ohio, and Indiana before following waves of settlers swept through them to claim the great Northwest and the far West. To this day Cumberland Gap remains something of a trade route, and in consequence the mountain people of eastern Tennessee and southeastern Kentucky have largely escaped the curse of inbreeding. These are the people who are engaged today in one of the great spectacular dramas of American industrial history—the soft-coal mine war, which has its center in Harlan and Bell counties, Kentucky. The coal miners who are actors in this drama are mountaineers, vigorous descendants of a hardy race of early-stock American settlers.

As one approaches the coal fields, driving, as I recently did, through southwestern Virginia and eastern Tennessee, one senses first a distinctly heightened interest in the stories coming out of the mine area—an interest which grows into tension as one crosses the State line into Knox or Bell or Harlan County, Kentucky. But it is the interest of people in the incidents of other people's struggles—in stories of killings, marches, strikes, arrests, government. Hardly anywhere is there evidence of any understanding of the underlying economic causes which make the struggle compulsory and inevitable. Pretty generally the newspapers and leading citizens speak of the Harlan situation in a vocabulary which is ecclesiastic and moralistic rather than economic.

Not yet have there penetrated to these parts of Virginia, Tennessee, and Kentucky even the beginnings of enlightened thinking regarding the drama in their midst. The significance of the prevailing depression has not apparently been caught. I was born and reared just two counties from Harlan. On my recent visit I noted that the clothes of the farmers and tradespeople and workers, even in the rich agricultural sections surrounding the mines, were worn out. I

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talked with these people. They have not been able to provide themselves and their families with new clothes. But there is an almost total non-understanding of the depression, and the cloudy resentment of their minds is turned, not against the government as such, but against the Administration. They will vote Democratic instead of Socialist, Republican, or Communist.

I had determined to go openly into Pineville and Harlan and I did. I always presented my business card (I am a newspaperman), told what I was doing there, and that I had come for information. Inevitably the coal operators and officials warned me—some with hostility, others kindly—that I should leave. The miners always were glad to talk, but repeated the cautioning. My first call in Pineville was at the county health office, to learn if possible the condition of nutrition among the school children. Health officials were initially hostile. Later they showed me their very incomplete records on the schools. I gained the impression that they are making an earnest effort in the face of great odds to assemble accurate health data. Their conversation revealed more than the records. They admitted freely the widespread undernourishment among school children and among adults in virtually all the mine camps. Four of the county nurses and the sanitary engineer told me of the prevalence of pellagra, flux, and influenza, caused, they explained, by two things—malnutrition and ignorance. The miners admittedly are underfed, but all these officials made a particular and heatedly argued point that even the little money the miners get is not intelligently spent. To assist the miners in intelligent spending, Ruth Etheridge, county home-demonstration agent, and Beulah Dittoe, county health nurse, have prepared a menu showing how a family of five can live a week on $8.83. They gave me a copy. It shows what is probably the most intelligent possible way to spend $8.83 for food. It allows for a two-pound roast on Sunday. The other twenty meals are meatless except for two pounds of bacon apportioned among five people at two breakfasts. For five people it allows one dozen eggs a week. It is a starvation diet. Furthermore it presumes an income of $8.83 a week per mine family, which is ridiculous, since most of the mines are working only one or two days a week. The pay averages from $2.50 to $3 a day, less cuts for house rent, light, coal, doctor's fee, burial fee, smithing, carbide, etc. To combat pellagra, a starvation disease, the health authorities were distributing a leaflet by the United States Department of Agriculture Extension Service advising the eating of milk, steaks, chickens, roasts, fish, tomatoes, cheese, eggs, whole cereals, and leafy and other vegetables. The leaflet has attractive pictures of raw foods.

Elsewhere in Harlan and Bell counties I encountered attitudes of unconcern and inhumanity toward the miners' conditions, but nowhere else did I find an equal contempt for their impoverished and degraded conditions of living. The personnel of the Bell County health office was aggressively contemptuous of the poverty-stricken standards of living among the miners. One of the women summed it up: "What these people need is not more wages, it's education."

Mr. J. T. Bradley of Pineville, who operates three mines in Bell and Harlan counties, gave me a most candid interview. He explained how the discriminatory freight rate of 35 cents a ton, imposed by the Interstate Commerce Commission, militates destructively against the Kentucky coal. It means that to compete against West Virginia and Pennsylvania coal mines, Kentucky operators have got to cut 35 cents a ton from their production costs. The miner bears the brunt of this cut. All the operators are bitter against the I. C. C. Like 93 per cent of the operators, Mr. Bradley leases his mines from absentee owners and pays them a royalty over and above a stipulated minimum land rent. The operators have got to make their carrying charges or go broke. They are under duress to do certain things to their workers and they do them. Mr. Bradley told me, what everybody there knows, that all the mines issue scrip, or company money, to their miners. This is good only in the company-owned stores. Asked whether there was any compulsion to make the miners trade at his stores, Mr. Bradley said: "Well, I just told my miners, 'Now boys, if you don't want to trade with me you can move along.'" As to comparison of prices with the ordinary grocery stores, he said: "Of course my prices are a little higher."

The best coal mine in Harlan County is at Wallins Creek and is operated by the Creech Coal Company. The president and general manager is R. W. Creech, a genial old gentleman of the Kentucky-colonel type, with long white mustachios and no tie. He has a pleasant drawl and a kindly feudal attitude toward "his miners." He accepts the miners as a part of the natural resources of the mountains just as he does the coal. His coal averages the remarkable height of 5 feet 8 inches in thickness and his mine is in splendid condition. I went a mile into this mine with one of the Creech boys and I ate a splendid dinner at their shack at the mine headquarters, where they sleep with loaded guns at their bedsides. Mr. Creech is looked upon by the Harlan County Coal Operators Association as a model employer, and he certainly is a pleasant and hospitable feudal humanitarian. But he is under compulsion to extract from his mine a minimum land rental of $18,000 a year to pay to a New York owner, plus overhead charges, and he is compelled to practice in his mine the same policies which have resulted in sinking the living standards of a whole population of old-stock American miners into the depths of destitution, starvation, and disease. There has been a great deal of violence and other trouble at this mine. As a result Mr. Creech has proclaimed the view of the entire Harlan County Coal Operators Association in his statement regarding the unionizing of the fields. "They'll bring a union in here over my dead body," he said. "I would rather close this mine forever than work with a union. I can do it. I have got mine [meaning enough to live on] and I will never submit to a union."

Two days later, in the same mountain hollow where the Creech mine is, I ate dinner at the soup kitchen that is maintained by the National Miners Union. This is the red union, into which the miners have flocked literally by the thousands, deserting the old United Mine Workers Union, which, they claim, called them on strike last spring and "ran out" on them. The day I was there 157 children were fed at this soup kitchen. Their meal was a plate of boiled potatoes, boiled beans, and a piece of corn bread laid on top. They get one meal a day and that is all. No meat, no leafy vegetables, no milk, no fruit. The children were white-faced and excitable. A scattering of adults also ate there. Many who did not have shoes to traverse the mountain roads sent buckets, and the victuals were put into the buckets and sent back to keep life in starving human bodies. Nevertheless, an ir-

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repressible strain of humor runs through these mountaineers. They had "heered" I was at "Uncle Bob" Creech's. I asked a group if they knew Mr. Creech.

"Shore, we know Uncle Bob."

I asked what they thought of him.

"Well, now, I'll tell ye. Uncle Bob's a pretty good old feller. He pats us on the back and tells us how sorry he is fer us; fact is, he's been a-pattin' us on the back so long he's about patted us all plum naked."

When the laughing had died down another miner remarked with the typical dryness which is inherent in their humor: "Hit don't go very fur, do hit?"

Apparently this is the one big thing the miners have learned, but which the operators have not learned: that sympathy and back-patting "don't go very fur." On this knowledge the strike is being built. It was at a miners' relief meeting in Pineville that I had the opportunity to observe the complete severance which this lack of understanding has made between miner and operator. The meeting was held in a large dirty room above a restaurant on the edge of town. One entered by stairs on the outside of the building. Representatives were present from eighty-three mines in Harlan, Bell, and Knox counties, and from a few mines in Tennessee. The room was packed. I spent seven hours in that room, talking with the miners and listening to their reports of conditions at their mines. The purpose of the meeting was to inform the National Miners Union organizers of conditions in each camp preparatory to the organization for relief when the mines should be called to strike. Representatives were asked to stand up and tell how many men were working, how many were blacklisted, how many mouths would have to be fed, whether the miners would come out when called. Sandwiched in between these reports were reports of the terrorism that is rampant in the coal fields. Men were there who had been beaten for organizing. Several had been kidnapped for distributing leaflets notifying miners of a union meeting. Many of them told of their homes being invaded. Most of them had seen violence; some had buried fellow-miners shot down by deputy sheriffs. Others had participated, under the United Mine Workers Union leaders, in the battle last spring at Evarts, near Harlan, when four deputies and one miner were killed. I talked with two miners who had buried, each one, a child the day before. The children had died of flux, or starvation. I know that many of the miners at the meeting were hungry. They met without food and left without having eaten. There was no whining. But there was about the meeting an earnestness of purpose that one could not miss. They worked through the long hours of that meeting with the concentration of men who believed there was no hope for themselves or their families except in what they were doing. This is their attitude toward the National Miners Union. It amounts frequently to a religious fervor. Professional union organizers told me that they have had in the Kentucky field the unique experience of having the organizing of unions taken out of their hands by the miners themselves. And they added that the work is being excellently and intelligently done with a minimum of coaching.

As I listened in on this Pineville meeting, the main incentive to a strike became plain. I came away convinced that the National Miners Union could not only strike every mine in that field with a show of food, but that they could raise an army with food, so desperately in need were so many of the camps. The mountaineer is traditionally individualistic and proud. One does not have to explore far into mountain lore to learn how quickly the mountaineer falls back upon his rifle or knife when in trouble. The I. W. W. came into the Kentucky field and for a while expanded its organization on this tendency. Direct action appeals to the mountain man. It was with some surprise that I heard on every hand of the fight waged against the I. W. W. by the red organizers. So positive has been the stand of the National Miners Union against violence, and so vigorously has it combated the I. W. W., that the I. W. W. has been largely ousted from the Kentucky field. There was a small group of I. W. W.'s near Evarts when I was in Kentucky, but I was told by Mr. Ward, secretary of the coal operators' association, that they numbered only about thirty members, and that the red union was really the only organization active in the territory.

Mr. Ward, at whose office I visited on my way out of Harlan, gave an interesting sidelight on the activities of the American Red Cross in the Kentucky field. Some weeks before I was there, the governors of seven States had sent a joint telegram to the Red Cross demanding that that organization do something to help the distressed and starving mine families. Nothing publicly was done, but Mr. Ward told me that the Red Cross had assisted in organizing the Harlan Citizens Relief Committee, which included representatives of the coal operators' association, the Legion, Kiwanis, churches, and other groups. I asked Mr. Ward if the miners would be able to get relief.

"Anybody that needs it can get it if they are deserving," he said.

"Could a striker's family get relief?"

"You don't think we are going to raise money to promote a strike against ourselves, do you?" he asked.

"Then it works out," I said, "that a strike-breaker will be given relief, but not the family of a striker."

"Well," he replied, "a man that won't work doesn't deserve help. They don't get much work, but some work is better than none, and this is no time to be striking."

Later, on my way north, I stopped off at Washington to see Miss Mabel Boardman, director of the National Red Cross. I had a long talk with her and with Mr. Bondy, director of disaster relief. She explained that the policy of the Red Cross prevents it from giving assistance even to starving people except in war or during a disaster falling under the classification of "an act of God." This policy, however, has been modified in certain cases of distress arising from industrial conflict so as to authorize local Red Cross chapters to function with relief. This, she said, had already been done in Harlan. It was then that I told her of my conversation with Mr. Ward, and mentioned the resemblance of this type of relief to strike-breaking. I also reminded her that the headquarters of the Red Cross in Pineville is in the office of one of the big coal operators. Both Miss Boardman and Mr. Bondy were seriously concerned over the Kentucky situation and were manifestly uneasy over the singular theoretical part being played in it by the Red Cross. A clue to the extent of their information as to what actually is going on in Kentucky was given when Miss Boardman asked whether I thought Moscow was financing the relief work of the National Miners Union in these coal fields.

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Desperation in New Zealand

By MARC T. GREENE

Auckland, New Zealand, April 20

NEW ZEALAND, always heretofore tranquil, prosperous, self-contained, and self-satisfied, has this week come face to face with the specter of revolution, and is more frightened at the sight than it dares admit, even to itself. It has seen half-starved workers, hundreds of them unemployed for more than two years, attack the police with any weapons that came to hand, overcome them, and proceed calmly and methodically to break into fifty stores and take therefrom the necessities so long lacking. It has seen authority defied and the sacred right of private property invaded by desperate men and women. It has seen what humanity will do when the barest needs of existence are wanting and the state will not aid, and it is aghast at the possibilities.

Trouble has been brewing in New Zealand for some time. Processions of the unemployed in Wellington have marched upon the Parliament buildings and sung "The Red Flag" while their spokesmen sought vainly for a decent hearing from the government. Starved workless in Dunedin have broken into food shops and fought the police who were promptly turned loose upon them. Mass-meetings and parades have been held all over the country, and the membership of the Communist Party of New Zealand has increased by hundreds. More than 50,000 workless out of a total population of less than 1,500,000 have seen their condition grow gradually worse. Their families have become ill from malnutrition; part-time work provided by the government has decreased from three or four days a week at fourteen shillings a day to one or two days at eight shillings; war and old-age pensions have been cut; shilling-in-the-pound taxes have been imposed on even their scant earnings; and a stubborn government composed largely of hard-headed and hard-hearted Scotch "pioneers of empire" has been withholding anything in the nature of a dole, since "New Zealand has always been a self-supporting country and must continue to be."

But only the dole can save New Zealand now, and what has happened here in Auckland is certainly the first muttering of real revolution unless prompt measures are taken to relieve the starving workers. Every one of the familiar moves followed the first outbreak of the unemployed. A thousand civilian police were sworn in. The New Zealand naval forces were summoned, and they, with hundreds of naval and military reservists in full fighting regalia, even to "tin hats," patrolled the streets every hour of the twenty-four. Mounted police were brought in from the country and even the fire department "stood by." Merchants whose windows had chanced to escape the general smashing promptly boarded them up and barricaded their doors, and so did the more timid citizens in their homes. The Mayor threatened to read the Riot Act which, under British law, makes any person who refuses to "move on" or otherwise obey the order of regular or emergency police liable to life imprisonment.

Yet all this did not prevent a repetition of the affair in another part of the city on the following night. More shops were broken into, more police sent to the hospital with battered heads, more workless, many of them non-participants in the rioting, clubbed by official and unofficial police, marines, and members of the British Legion. The "forces of law and order" were thereupon augmented by as many of the employees of the large business establishments as could be induced or compelled to enlist as special constables, by every military and naval reservist within a hundred miles of Auckland, and by all the sailors from the New Zealand "navy." All right of assembly was denied the unemployed, whether indoors or out, and no meetings will be permitted for a long time to come.

In the meantime business in Auckland is at a standstill and many stores still remain barricaded. The local press, naturally enough, attributes the outbreak to "hoodlums" and "gangsters," elements markedly absent from New Zealand life up to now. As usual "Communist agitators" are alleged to have fired the "unruly element" to activity, and the disbandment of the Communist Party in the Dominion is demanded, as well as the deportation of "every red." No newspaper in the entire country dares so much as suggest that this was the action of desperate, starved men and women, hopeless of relief from the government, maddened by police tyranny, and finally goaded into extremes when a frightened policeman fired his revolver into the crowd and seriously wounded a young girl. Even the fact that this occurred is denied by the newspapers without exception; yet any number of people were eyewitnesses to it.

It is clear, then, that an effectively muzzled press adds to the trials of the New Zealand workers. By no chance can they get a newspaper hearing, and the conditions under which they are struggling to exist are determinedly misrepresented. Their pleas for relief are now concentrated in a vehement and unanimous demand for the dole. The public-works schemes which have kept the unemployed from actual want during the past two winters have exhausted the government's reserve funds and are on the point of being discontinued altogether.

The New Zealand Government is a coalition of the United and Reform parties, formerly the Liberal and Conservative, respectively. The only opposition is that of Labor, small but articulate, and now especially clamorous for a resort to the dole as an alternative to destitution for the workless, with perhaps widespread revolution. The Prime Minister, Mr. Forbes, is head of the United Party, while the Reform leader, Mr. Coates, is chairman of the Unemployment Commission. The coalition, never very secure, is breaking up under pressure of the desperate economic situation and the inability of the parties to the union to agree upon relief measures. For weeks nothing at all has been done at Wellington of a constructive character, and so acrimonious have grown the debates that they have even come to fisticuffs two or three times. No hope has been held out to the unemployed and resentment has passed into desperation, a desperation that is threatening extreme measures in several parts of the Dominion, even as already resorted to in Auckland.

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Jimmy the Well-dressed Man

A Vaudeville Act with Music

By GEORGE S. KAUFMAN

The scene is a cross between a vaudeville street "drop" and a meeting of the Hofstadter Committee. Except for Mr. Seabury and Mr. Walker, the entire gathering is painted on the curtain. The Tammany members are in the act of laughing and applauding, while the Chairman, with gavel upraised, is threatening to clear the street. Mr. Walker is on the stand; Mr. Seabury leans against an ashcan.

There is a chord in the orchestra as the curtain rises.

MR. SEABURY

Your Honor, this committee
Has some questions it would hand
To the Mayor of New York City,
Who is sitting on the stand.

MR. WALKER

I promise not to halt or pause;
I'm famous for my wit;
I'm sitting on the stand because
I can't stand on the sit.

[*He dances*]

MR. SEABURY

Now, to you it's old and hoary,
But it's very new to us,
So we'd like to hear the story
Of the Equitable bus.

MR. WALKER

I remember! Why, the driver
Sees a woman grab her knee,
And he says, "Not worth a fiver!
Legs they ain't no treat to me!"

[*He cuts a caper. He offers half of it to Mr. Seabury, who refuses because he has just had his lunch*]

MR. SEABURY

Now, to open matters wider
(I guess this is where we clash):
Did Samuel Ungerleider
Ever slip you any cash?

MR. WALKER

Say, here's the greatest yarn on earth—
The one about the dame
That got into the Pullman berth—
But I'll never tell her name.

[*He throws his hat into the air. It comes down with $263,000 in it*]

MR. SEABURY

And that little trip to Europe—
What did you go *on* and *with?*
Though you never hold the poor up,
What about this Mr. Smith?

MR. WALKER

Smith? The name's completely new;
I'm working in the dark—
Unless you mean the brothers who
Are known as Trade and Mark?

[*He turns a cartwheel, furnished by the Parmelee Taxicab Company*]

MR. SEABURY

And now also on the list—O,
Will you please relate to me
What you know of Mr. Sisto
And his taxi company?

MR. WALKER

I'm very glad you asked me, kid—
I got just what was due me,
For all that fellow ever did
Was be a Sisto to me.

[*He disappears for a second behind the stand, reappearing almost immediately in a brand-new suit. Kindness of countless friends*]

MR. SEABURY

At this point attention centers
On a certain bag of gold—
Mr. Block discreetly enters,
And his thoughtful ten-year-old.

MR. WALKER

Inquire of Mr. Freud, you sap!
That's back to chicken-pox!
For since I was a little chap
I've always played with Blocks.

[*He does a buck and wing. He then does ninety-nine more bucks, making a hundred bucks in all. It isn't much, but of course there was no investment*]

MR. SEABURY

You got some money from Mr. Schwartz
For services of various sorts—
I wish that you'd explain to me
Just why he gave you such a fee.

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MR. WALKER

Fee, fi, fo, fum!
Whoops-a-daisy, and ho hum!
The whole committee is on the bum—
Where do you get your questions from?
Hey, diddle, doodle!
The cash and the boodle—
  It's ten to one they'll win again!
So what do I care
If you give me the air—
  They'll only vote me in again!
In again!
In again!
They'll only vote me—
  in—
    a-gain!

[*He dances. The rest of the committee comes down off the curtain and joins in the dance. At this point the piper comes on to the scene. The public pays him*]

CURTAIN

In the Driftway

A PESSIMISTIC friend of the Drifter's came to see him the other day. "If you want proof—as I suppose you don't—that the human race is past saving," said he pleasantly, "you should have been with me at a newsreel movie I just saw." The Drifter never interrupts his friend when such a mood is upon him. The friend went on: "First we saw a picture of the Seabury inquiry, with Mayor Walker in the chair and the hooting audience punctuating his remarks with hurrahs; next we saw a group of Jews holding their hats on while they leaned their heads against the Wailing Wall in Jerusalem and wailed; then we saw pictures of the St. Vitus dance at Luxemburg, where once every year the populace makes a pilgrimage to the shrine, and approaches it by a dance of three steps forward and two back, requiring five hours to traverse the necessary distance. We went from Luxemburg to South Africa; there a group of pitch-black natives, commanded by a white officer, engaged in bayonet tactics in which they rushed forward and threw themselves sword foremost at stuffed bags, the while they uttered their tribal yell in blood-curdling tones. And last but not least we saw and heard a little girl speak a prize-winning piece about the American Constitution. She said that though empires might rise and fall and civilizations ripen and decay, the American Constitution was eternal, because it established principles which were fundamental for all subsequent society, namely, that government is founded upon justice and liberty. She was introduced by a Senator who declared that there was no one in the Senate who would not be proud to have composed that oration." Upon this the Drifter's friend rested his case—"since," as he added, "an intelligent person like yourself will not need an exegesis." The Drifter cannot do better than to pass this flattery on to his readers.

THE DRIFTER

Finance

A "Run on the Dollar"

IN referring to the "entirely unjustified run upon the American dollar," in his address to the Senate on May 31, President Hoover was doubtless referring to the heavy gold movement from the United States, which amounted to more than $220,000,000 last month. It is a little difficult to follow the President when he says that "our dollar stands at a serious discount in the markets of the world for the first time in half a century." That period of time would carry us back approximately to the resumption of gold payments in 1879. The American dollar was at a serious discount, through no fault of our own, in the late summer of 1914, when the blockade of gold shipments caused by fear of the German fleet sent the sterling rate to $7 compared with parity of $4.86½.

But today sterling is at a discount of more than 20 per cent in terms of dollars, and no one anywhere in the world need sell American dollars at a discount, since he can instantly receive full payment in gold on demand. The discount on dollar "futures" existing in some markets is merely an expression of speculative opinion, and in no sense reflects the real truth—which is that American dollars are worth par in terms of gold, and more than par in terms of most of the world's currencies.

It is not surprising, however, in view of all that has happened at Washington, that certain foreign countries should be taking gold out of the United States at a rate only limited by the capacity of steamers to transport the metal and the willingness of the insurance companies to cover the risk of shipment. For months certain government officials and legislators have been talking about the advisability of producing "controlled" inflation or even of voluntarily abandoning the gold standard as a business stimulant. There was never the slightest reason to believe that this kind of inflation could be generated or that, if it were generated, it would result in anything but a resounding smash in values. Yet our light-hearted authorities were apparently willing to try it. Experienced foreigners, coupling these schemes with the apparent determination of Congress not to levy adequate taxes or make adequate cuts in government expenses, concluded that they had better have their funds at home, or in Switzerland, Holland, or elsewhere, than in New York. The gigantic gold shipments of recent weeks are the result.

Fortunately, it is still probable that our capacity to pay gold will exceed their capacity to take it. Short-term investments and sight balances held here for foreign account have recently been reduced to something like $750,000,000, according to a *Wall Street Journal* estimate. Not all of that sum can be taken home, unless things go utterly to smash; aggregate foreign balances of about $500,000,000 are known to be necessary in order to carry on current business, including very substantial payments still being made to us on account of foreign bond interest and merchandise debts. As of a recent date the Reserve banks still held more than $1,000,000,000 of potential gold surplus now deposited as security for Federal Reserve note issues, which could be released.

These gold shipments are a ruthless and violent showdown; the gold standard was never designed for such purposes. They are the natural consequence of the willingness of a minority to try anything or everything in the line of economic remedies (except taxes and economy), regardless of whether a reasoned preview indicated almost certain failure. If they cure the hankering for quack remedies, they may yet be worth their cost.

S. PALMER HARMAN

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Summer Book Section

What Is Left of Goethe?

By CLIFTON FADIMAN

THE recent celebration of the hundredth anniversary of Goethe's death had a peculiarly hollow ring about it. It seems to have been organized by the professorial class, which has had a vested interest in Goethe ever since it became clear that the second part of "Faust" called aloud for footnotes; and to have been celebrated by dutiful regiments of innocent Teutonic children and by those French intellectuals most remote from the harshness of contemporary life. (André Suarès, for example, proclaims that "Europe's only salvation lies in the spirit of Goethe"—which will be comforting news to some tens of millions of starving European workers and peasants.) The entire celebration, in fact, has been faint-hearted and academic. The celebrants seemed very uncertain as to what Goethe really meant to them, but quite certain that he was a classic and that classics must at all costs be upheld. The vanguard of his own country, however, could not relate themselves to Goethe. Gertrude Isolani, in a recent issue of the *Berliner Volks-Zeitung,* expressed the real point of view of unregimented German youth when she wrote: "An intellectually choice element is still concerned with Goethe, but among German youth this element is diminishing. Today, as competent authority reveals, only those German students remote from actual life or brought up in seclusion ever read Goethe. Even German young men who are literarily inclined prefer other German lyrics to those of Goethe."

Claudel (the remark is said to have cost him the Berlin ambassadorship) referred to the author of "Faust" as "that solemn ass." A noted American poet and student of world literature, in conversation with me a few weeks ago, put him down as "one of the greatest stuffed shirts in history." But it is not necessary to agree with these sweeping judgments to feel that there is some vital lack of connection between Goethe and our own time. My misgivings were emphasized by a recent reading of Mr. Nevinson's centenary appreciation* of Goethe. This is a temperate, a witty, a clear, and a beautifully written book; we should expect nothing less from the author of "Changes and Chances." But it does not seem to relate Goethe to us who are alive today; it is the measured appreciation of a scholar and a gentleman who has, more or less, inherited the Goethe tradition of the late nineteenth century. It did not satisfy me; so I decided to read and reread as much of Goethe as I could in the space of six weeks, in order to see what vitality his work retained for at least one reasonably intelligent individual born after the turn of the century. The following random comments are merely a reader's report. They are notes intended to indicate the points at which I felt bewilderment or dissatisfaction. They simply chart, in a general and unrelated way, those areas which stretch most blankly and untraversably between Goethe and ourselves. What I tried to find out, after a painstaking reading of some dozen-odd volumes, was not how great Goethe is, judged by traditional literary criteria, but simply what is left of him here and now.

The first thing I discovered was that most of Goethe is simply unreadable, even after making all due allowances for the years that have elapsed since his era. The "Faust" remains, of course—an unsatisfactory, puzzling, and wayward near-masterpiece, fitfully alive in individual lines and passages. "Dichtung und Wahrheit" is still interesting, as are parts of "Wilhelm Meister." And as a creator of compact lyrics, as *Gelegenheitsdichter,* Goethe remains surely among the masters. But most of the rest of his work is dull; and evidently many others have found this to be so, for he and Dante are perhaps the two greatest unread classics in our Western literature.

The Goetheans admit that their hero is not very readable; they insist, rather, that it is the spectacle of his life and personality and the force of his ideas as expressed in conversation as well as in his more formal work which remain alive and influential today. Goethe was strong; he was beautiful; he was long-lived; and he undoubtedly talked a great deal, particularly to third-rate people. He was probably a great personality—for his time. Certainly he had a capacious intellect. But what we are trying now to discover is whether this personality and this intellect carry over for us in any dynamic way. Are they useful to us? Is his wisdom relevant to our dilemmas? In other words, is he *alive,* in the sense that Stendhal, Rousseau, Marx are still obviously alive and part of us?

I doubt it.

Ours is, if it is anything, a revolutionary epoch, probably the greatest revolutionary epoch of the last two thousand years. Even reactionaries are forced to think in comparatively revolutionary terms. Goethe is for us precisely the non-revolutionary man. He is the archetype of the non-revolutionary man, the great reconciler, the great compromiser, the great harmonizer. Despite his constant insistence upon *das Werden,* he thought statically. This is particularly notable in his political beliefs. He disliked the French Revolution because its horrors made him uncomfortable. The greatest exterior event of his whole lifetime—1789—produced no fruitful reaction in him. He remained imperturbable. Indeed, his real answer to the Revolution is contained in "Hermann und Dorothea," a retreat conducted in artificial hexameters from the crash and dissonance of a collapsing world to the safe bucolic bower of sentiment. His nonrelevance to our revolutionary era is symbolized by his nonrelevance to his own. He shrank from 1789, misunderstood 1792, romanticized Napoleon. Indeed, all catastrophic political or economic change confused and frightened him, for it threatened his ideal of cultural self-realization. Even in his wildest *Sturm und Drang* period, he was never really a rebel. Werther was not up in arms against society, nor was he frustrated by society. Werther was outside society, an individualist *in vacuo,* crushed by a lack of breathable atmos-

* "Goethe: Man and Poet." By Henry W. Nevinson. Harcourt, Brace and Company. $2.75.

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phere. And something of Werther clung always to Goethe, even in his grandest, most solemn, most "objective" moods. "Revolutions," he told that eternal serious-minded sophomore Eckermann, "are quite impossible as long as governments are constantly just and continually watchful, so that they may anticipate them by improvements at the right time and not hold out till they are forced to yield by pressure from beneath." But beneath this complacent and empty meliorism lay the philosophic reactionary: "Could we perfect human nature, we might also expect a perfect state of things; but as it is, there will always be a wavering hither and thither. . . . Let the shoemaker abide by his last, the peasant by his plow, and let the king know how to govern." There is a passage in a letter he wrote while on a tour of the mining villages near Weimar which expresses perfectly his notion of fixed virtues belonging to fixed classes: "What love I feel for that class of men which is called the lower, but which in God's sight is certainly the highest! Among them we find all the virtues together—moderation, contentment, uprightness, good-faith, joy over the smallest blessing, harmlessness, patience, endurance." It is easy to perceive that it is the "harmlessness" and the "patience" that particularly please him. They confirm his feeling for the fixed, the safe.

Goethe's mind was dominated by this notion of hierarchy, of fixed class obligations. It is not merely that he was a snob—that might be forgiven him, though it is difficult to stomach the grandiose-fawning tone in which he refers to his "hereditary Grand Duke" and "Grand Duchess" as if they were something more than pompous and light-minded provincials. But he erects this snobbery into a dangerous moral doctrine which, if adopted, would plunge us once more into the fixed and constricted world of the feudal regime. "The citizen," he says, "is as free as the nobleman, when he restrains himself within the limits which God appointed by placing him in that rank. . . . Freedom consists not in refusing to recognize anything above us, but in respecting something which is above us; for, by respecting it, we raise ourselves to it, and by our very acknowledgment make manifest that we bear within ourselves what is higher, and are worthy to be on a level with it." This seems to be high-minded idealism; but upon examination it reveals itself as a clever defense of the status quo.

Goethe, of course, did not believe in mere passivity; he was all for change, growth, activity, development. But I have never been able to get a clear idea of what he meant by these terms, because they do not seem to attach themselves to any point of reference. We surely exalt activity—but with some end in view. He is all for activity—on a treadmill. "Der Zweck des Lebens ist das Leben selbst." All change is conceived simply as a succession of differing psychic states in the individual. This change is presumed to occur within a permanent, eternally fixed social frame. "All the straining, all the striving is eternal peace in God," we learn from "Faust." But if this is true, one kind of striving is pretty much as good as another; the essential thing is to keep busy in your own social sphere and eventually heaven will open its gates to you. This was the doctrine of the medieval church. In a slightly altered form it is the doctrine of benevolent capitalism.

"Redemption is for those who continually strive"—but for what are they to strive? That is the question we are asking ourselves today; we shall find no clear reply in Goethe. Activity is a goal in itself for him. That is why he admired Napoleon in politics and Byron in literature—and almost comically misunderstood both. He saw Napoleon and Byron as men of indomitable fused energy, brilliant destinies, grand performances. But he never seems to have asked himself what was the significance of Napoleon's career in terms of its effect upon the world and its inhabitants. He was content with energy, unreferred to anything outside itself. With remarkable acumen he foresaw the Suez and Panama canals and predicted who would build and own them. But he has words only for the dramatic grandeur of the tasks, never once conceiving either feat in terms of its human, its social, its economic influence. "The action is superior to its results."

Activity *qua* activity took on, of course, a religious aspect—which makes it even more incomprehensible to us today. He said: "To me the eternal existence of my soul is proved from my idea of activity; if I work on incessantly till my death, nature is bound to give me another form of existence when the present one can no longer sustain my spirit." Thus, we are to keep ourselves ferociously and meaninglessly busy in order that we may graduate into some heavenly sphere where we can be even more ferociously and even more meaninglessly busy. "We are here to eternize ourselves"—this sentimental misreading of Spinoza, at which we can do little but yawn, is Goethe's most profound apology for his rootless and goalless activism.

Like the decaying business activism of our own day (closely related in pattern to Goethe's) it is predominantly and meaninglessly optimistic. It is the Goethean optimism, I believe, which most repels us, whether it takes the simple form of an exhortation to "cheerfulness" (but over what?) or the complicated aspect of the misty-mystic salvationism of the conclusion of "Faust." This optimism is valueless because, again, it is an optimism without points of reference. It is removed in expression but not in kind from the muscular inspirationalism of Edgar Guest, Bruce Barton, and other professional barbarians. Goethe would have scorned Pangloss—but they would have understood each other nevertheless. Optimism is moving and sound when it bases itself on an objective observation of concrete lives, classes, and situations, and when, from this observation, it extracts a set of definite and realizable social aims. The optimism of "Das Kapital" is alive; that of "Faust" is dead.

The optimism of a really great social philosopher is based on a shrewd understanding of the tragedy of his own day; Goethe's is simply a kind of solemn and mystical complacency. He fled from tragedy whenever he saw it coming, twisted the natural course of his dramas ("Iphigenie auf Tauris," for example) to admit of an easy and harmonious resolution. In 1797 we find him writing to Schiller: "Merely thinking of the enterprise [of writing tragedy] terrifies me." In 1832 he had forgotten even that it had ever terrified him. "Goethe," says Carl Einstein, in a recent issue of *transition,* "is the type of the untragic man, and this despite all the aspects of Faust, who, in the last analysis, ends as a successful business man." Vice and disease and poverty intimidated Goethe; whenever he caught himself brooding over them, he would turn to his faithful Eckermann and exclaim: "But let us banish these hypochondriacal thoughts. What are you doing? What have you seen today? Tell me, and inspire me with good thoughts." And from these "good thoughts" we can surely derive no sustenance, for they are

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the expression of a kind of cowardice, strange as the word may seem when applied to Goethe.

Those who argue for the existence in Goethe of a sense of tragedy point to his famous doctrine of *Entsagen*—renunciation. True enough, he was always telling people to renounce—but what it was exactly that they were to renounce I cannot make out. Renunciation—whatever it may mean—is simply another form of activity, another spiritual exercise, undertaken for its own sake or for the sake of "experience." It is difficult, if one traces the eighty-three years of his life, to discover what Goethe himself renounced—except one young woman after another whom he tearfully and poetically abandoned after he had extracted from them his meed of "experience." His doctrine of renunciation has not even the beauty of Marcus Aurelius's stoicism: it is a phrase without real content. As a matter of fact, the central core of Goethe's practical life was based not on renunciation, but on acceptance. He accepted Weimar; which means that he accepted a third-rate provincialism—with, it is true, a few Byronic groans and murmurs. The essential structure of his life was one of middle-class acceptance—acceptance of his class, his income, and of the adulation of the glorified ladies' clubs of his later years.

The final impression, after an attentive reading of Goethe, is of an eclecticism so enormous as to be quite meaningless. Sainte-Beuve, meaning to praise him, said of Goethe: "He is not merely tradition, but he is all traditions combined." I find this merely bewildering. I find that Goethe is a Protestant, a Catholic, a pagan, a mystic, a stoic, a Greek, a German, a classicist, a romantic. He is anything you happen to be looking for—the professor's delight. But in a man in whom we can find anything we wish, there is nothing that we can really wish to find. There is little in Dante's politics and religion which corresponds to our vision today; but at least we know what he stands for. He is precise and intelligent within the frame of the dogmas of his time. Not so Goethe; the professors have not yet done telling us what he means. Goethe's formulas, his "big thoughts" (so dear to the German mind), are inclusive enough to yield almost any desired interpretation. He himself confessed that he did not know what he intended to embody in "Faust." In fact, he says: "I am rather of the opinion that the more incommensurable, and the more incomprehensible to the understanding, a poetic production, so much the better it is." To the transcendentalists, the Los Angeles mystics (the mystical pietist was always strong in Goethe—that was what won over Emerson), this will appear sublime. Let them extract what nourishment they can from it.

It is easy to be captious when talking about Goethe because his personality—pompous, humorless, vain—is superficially so irritating. But it would be foolish to deny that his career is one of the most imposing of modern times. He raised dignity to a fine art. He was the Lionel Strongfort of the intellect, developing himself incessantly and unsparingly. His works contain, if not the best, surely the most that has been thought and said in the world by any one man. He has uttered enough golden sayings and wise saws to fill the commonplace books of dozens of his faithful correspondents. He organized his reputation as a general would an army and arranged with remarkable skill that posterity should stand in awe of him. After all is said, he probably had the most generally *receptive* mind of his century.

And yet so little of his wisdom, so little of his learning, so little of his vision and personality seem to come down to us today in a living form. His optimism is not ours; his ideal of culture is not ours; his serenity and moderation are irritating; his view of history is ungenerative. We cannot read him with pleasure or profit. The younger generation in all lands has forgotten him or at best accepts him with an uncomfortable grimace of simulated reverence. If he were taken seriously I honestly believe he would act as a brake to progress. But it is a relief to feel that he is not so taken, that he is, in all probability, the greatest source of non-usable "wisdom" the Western world has produced in the last few centuries.

Veronal for November

By CLINCH CALKINS

Why not, if sheep fail, count the Leonids?
I will pretend I'm sailing in a plane.
(Old Monahan is sick in bed with pain.)
I will gaze out on interstellar noon.
I'll range my telescope across the skies
While, down below, the misty breath of man
Shrouds the malingering end of Monahan;
While Robert Monahan in sick-bed lies.

See on the broken chair beside his bed
The emptied cup of charity's weak broth.
Unmerited, no doubt. A man of sloth
He must have been, by liquor weakly led.
(Perhaps if I took veronal I might
Sleep through, this once, until the break of light.)

I hate a night like this, with black-frost killing
The last of the flowers. Why must I toss and turn?
Why must perspective be so hard to learn?
Why can't I with my spanning finder scan
The celestial body of young Monahan?—
England in Egypt! Why can't I hear him bawl
Colossal blasphemy upon the desert thirst
Till it reechoes and is twice accursed?
(He broke his bowels in the camel corps.
Tight-trussed he cleans my windows, scrubs my floor.)
Why can't I see the braggart miner sprawl
Across the Mesabi ranges, why not feel
The Titan chest he loaned to U. S. Steel?
(Concaved he tends my garden at a crawl.)

Tonight the blood of the dahlias is spilling.

And Monahan cries out, "Oh let me go
I've worked and earned. I have begot and spent.
The landlord's knocking; he demands the rent.
I've nothing left. I've given him all for keeping."

The night creaks on, like runners on the snow,
And Monahan and I can do no sleeping.
Oh, Monahan come count the stars with me.
Oh, Monahan come sight the Leonids
Splashing the heavens above the mists of man.
It is less cold up here. Come Monahan!

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O Quietly the Earth Is Spun

By HAL SAUNDERS WHITE

O quietly the earth is spun
And slumbers in her motion bright.
The bee is ambered at mid tune
And taken in a cage of light.

Nettle and dockweed in the sun
Have put off time. These meadows lie
Clothed with unalterable noon
Under imperishable sky.

I who have seen a thing so clear—
Time rooted in a world of light—
Can find no images to bear
The burden of a thing so bright.

O perfectly the earth is spun;
And to be born is but to die
Imperishable beneath the sun
And rooted in eternity;

And but to die is to be born
And taken in a cage of light . . .
O quietly the earth is spun
And slumbers in her motion bright.

Books

Can America Plan?

A Planned Society. By George Soule. The Macmillan Company. $2.50.

GEORGE SOULE is one of the ablest economic writers that we have, and his present volume is one of the few that seem likely to survive the depression which gave birth to them. It would be distinguished from most of the current output by the mere fact that it is not hysterical, but in addition to this it has the rare positive virtues of solid information, moderation of statement, a recognition of many of the complexities of economic problems and economic organization, and in general of a genuinely realistic view. It presents a vivid picture of the nineteen twenties, and of the economic and political state to which they have brought us; it discusses acutely the dilemma of the contemporary liberal; it contains an instructive criticism of the Marxian philosophy, and an illuminating brief account of the economic organization of Soviet Russia.

Yet with all its incidental virtues, Mr. Soule's book is at bottom disappointing. His indictment of our present "unmanaged" civilization is surely impressive, but when he has built up a case for the need for "planning," his most concrete suggestion is for the creation of a National Economic Board, the equivalent of Stuart Chase's Peace Industries Board and Charles Beard's National Economic Council. This board, made up of "qualified experts representing the nation as a whole," would have mainly fact-finding and advisory powers. It would, for example, "help in working out the best form of organization for each industry," and after calling in representatives of the various interests in that industry, it would make its recommendations and propose any necessary legislation to Congress. "The board should not be limited in its ultimate choice by any bias in favor of 'private enterprise' on the one hand or in favor of 'socialism' on the other. It should choose the form which, after thorough examination, seemed best suited to the ends in view."

Now this proposal is made after Mr. Soule has put forward, as a "criterion" for planning policy, "a temporary mark, to be achieved in ten years, which would furnish a minimum income of $5,000 a year, for a forty-hour five-day week." In the light of so ambitious a goal, just how effective is Mr. Soule's National Economic Board likely to be? It would be appointed, to begin with, by Mr. Hoover or his intellectual and political equivalent. It seems improbable that it would be biased, therefore, in favor of socialism, or government ownership, or any control that threatened to be costly to private interests. It is unlikely that its personnel would be any better than that of our two most respected existing bodies of the same type, the Interstate Commerce Commission and the Federal Reserve Board. Neither of these had the union of foresight and courage necessary to take the proper action at the proper time. The Interstate Commerce Commission now apparently thinks it would have been a good thing if it had raised freight rates in the prosperous years before 1930 and compelled the railroads to use the surplus to build up a reserve; but it took no action, and instead it felt compelled illogically to raise freight rates in a time of depression when everything else was being reduced, and when even the same freight-rate level meant a heavier proportional burden on shippers. The Federal Reserve Board had not the courage to raise the discount rate in 1928 in the face of popular feeling and the influence of Messrs. Coolidge and Mellon, and even refused to permit the New York Federal Reserve Bank to raise its rate when it wanted to. It admonished the naughty speculators to stop gambling, but it saw to it that money rates were kept low enough to make gambling attractive. When the Farm Board came upon the scene it adopted precisely the same policy, telling the farmer that he mustn't plant so much wheat, but it none the less bought his wheat at the top and holds it for sale at the bottom; instead of "stabilizing" wheat, it made the fluctuations even more violent. Are these the type of government "experts" that are going to save us from the vagaries of "unmanaged" business?

Let us assume, however, that Mr. Soule's National Economic Board proves more intelligent and courageous than any existing federal board. It would still make its recommendations to the same sort of Congress that we have today. There is no assurance that Congress would adopt any one of the board's proposals in the form in which it was made. There is no assurance, even, that the recommendations would not be ignored. The Interstate Commerce Commission is constantly making recommendations in long reports that Congress is as constantly ignoring.

I would not have it supposed from all this that I am opposed either to the general idea of "planning" or to the National Economic Board that Mr. Soule suggests. I believe the experiment of having such a board is worth trying. But far more important, from a purely economic standpoint, than one more board is a radical revision of our political system that would make our government at least as flexible and responsive to public opinion as the parliamentary government of Great Britain, that would give expression and representation to minority opinion in a way in which our federal government does not begin to do, and that would at the very least transform the House of Representatives from an unwieldy body of undistinguished men chiefly interested in their local districts to a more compact body of men primarily interested in the welfare of the whole country. If such major revisions could be made in our political structure, the independence and the effectiveness of the proposed National Economic Board would be greatly increased.

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But we shall do well not to deceive ourselves with false hopes. Such a board is not going to provide the workers with a minimum annual income of $5,000 within ten years. Mr. Soule glosses over the real difficulties of planning when he says that such a board would "correlate the plans and practices of the various industries," that it "would work out a general plan for raising the lowest incomes and regulating the flow of investment and credit," and so on. This is merely telling us what the ideal goal would be and assuming that one is offering a solution when one is merely stating a problem.

HENRY HAZLITT

"Between the Yellow and the Silver Both"

Collected Poems of Elinor Wylie. Edited by William Rose Benét. Alfred A. Knopf. $3.50.

HERE, in one volume, are the poems of Elinor Wylie, who died in 1928, her forty-second year. And Elinor Wylie will live through her poetry rather than through her polished and highly mannered prose. The course of her development as a poet—and for that matter as a prose writer—was entirely consistent; she bridged the gap between the romantic expansionists of the nineteen twenties and the classicists of the nineteen thirties. All of her work is a study in poetic method, in artistry and manner; not until she began her last book did that method, fired by passion and final conviction, result in authentic and lasting poetry. In "Angels and Earthly Creatures" the technique built up through years becomes the vessel for expression of deeply felt emotion. We might never have had this volume, and, without it, we could have been sure only of Mrs. Wylie's precise and artistic manner; we could not have been sure of her greatness as a poet.

Elinor Wylie's birth date is about the same as Edna Millay's, but Mrs. Wylie's first book appeared when she was about thirty-five, Edna Millay's when she was about nineteen or twenty. In seven years Mrs. Wylie wrote four novels and four books of verse, all of them experimenting with new effects to be achieved through a kind of delicate precision in the statement of rather subtle feelings. Meantime Miss Millay, who had written her best poems earlier, was for the most part echoing her own magnificently spontaneous lyrical outpourings. She had become even more completely rooted in the literary tradition of the romantic poets, returning to these poets for imagery and inspiration. Not so Mrs. Wylie. This poet, developing her talent so late, broke free almost at once from the very early Millay influence to be seen in her first and slightest lyrics, and turned, probably without realizing it, to that interest in the highly polished form, the subtle statement, which was the beginning of the classical reaction. Her subject was herself, even as was Miss Millay's, but she sang of herself impersonally; she translated her feelings immediately into delicately wrought images. She was no profound thinker, or philosopher, or metaphysician—the basis of all her poetry was emotional—but she began very soon to play with the subtler shades of feeling which inevitably have their ideational counterpart. Her vocabulary was small, very small, but she bent words to her own precise purposes, using them with no romantic lavishness, but with an intellectual awareness of their inevitability. Mrs. Wylie, in her writings, was always intent upon the form, upon the refinement of every image and feeling; not, as is Miss Millay, upon the passionate and luxuriant emotion expressed as directly as possible. And for all these reasons Elinor Wylie's poetry is far more contemporary today, when the scene shifts so rapidly that we have hardly comprehended one movement before another is upon us. We see in her poems hints of that intellectuality, that delight in intricacy of expression, that ever-present analytical mind, that emphasis upon form and distinction in manner, which are the modern mode. Edna Millay's poetry began with the rather naive and violent projection of a personality, and ends, it seems, in much the same way, save for the poet's accumulation of a more literary imagery through which to project her own feeling. Elinor Wylie's poetry began with mannered verse, with a delight in method rather than a desire to express a personality, and ended with the full expression of a personality through a perfected technique. She stands between the very ripe yellow of the so-called "renaissance" poets in America (poets given over to an exuberant exploration of the country itself—Frost, of New England; Sandburg and Lindsay, of the Middle West—and to a tremendously emotional expression of themselves) and the rather too cool silver of the intellectually dogmatic classicists who hold the field in poetry today. Had she never written her last and greatest book she would have been one of those poets who turn the stream of literature in a new direction. With her last book she became, in herself, an authentic artist.

Elinor Wylie's growth was slow; she matured late. Fashion and form interested her, her own feelings interested her. She sought to weave her feelings into the most skilful and brittle patterns. Ill as she was most of her life, she had a passion for bravery and for detachment. Love and death, the two Millay themes, became her themes likewise, but to neither would she give herself over completely. Instead, she would translate these themes into intricate and sometimes merely prettily fashioned images. She developed no consistent symbols; her imagery remained personal. It had to do always with the polished, the stony, the carved, the glassy, the silvery surfaces of things. It did not plunge into the heart of the emotion but played fancifully over the chrysalis in which the emotion was incased. Aristocrat by birth, the poet was aristocratic in the detachment she obtained from her own terrors. She wanted love, but her mind told her that love was an illusion; she knew for years that death would take her early, so she made death into a fine and jeweled retreat. She was a beautiful woman and she worshiped beauty in herself and in others, but she emphasized always the clean outlines of loveliness rather than the fleshy and sensuous wholeness of beauty. Always her mind caught at a kind of minute permanence, moments of perfection which might stand against the flood of time. She never gave herself up to feeling; she played with it emotionally and intellectually; until, in those very last years, she found herself compelled to believe in the very passions she had dallied with. The great sequence of love sonnets in her last book, "Angels and Earthly Creatures," is the final poetic expression of a woman who, having for long been the artist with words, has come at last into a profound understanding of life and of herself. The sequence is, therefore, one of the very few great modern contributions to the sonnet form. There is no literary verbiage here as there is in "Fatal Interview" by Miss Millay; there is the heart itself speaking in the most simple and the most personal language. The spirit is utterly humble before its own conversion. Artifice has vanished, but the master-hand controls the form while the heart dictates the lines. All Mrs. Wylie's earlier poetry is a little cold; this is fired:

> Upon your heart, which is the heart of all
> My late discovered earth and early sky,
> Give me the dearest privilege to die;
> Your pity for the velvet of my pall;
> Your patience for my grave's inviolate wall;
> And for my passing bell, in passing by,
> Your voice itself diminished to a sigh
> Above all other sounds made musical.

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Meanwhile I swear to you I am content
To live without a sorrow to my name;
To live triumphant, and to die the same,
Upon the fringes of this continent,
This map of Paradise, this scrap of earth
Whereon you burn like flame upon a hearth.

And after this sequence comes the single great lyric, Hymn to Earth, which is, I think, certain to go down as immortal poetry. Here finally the theme of death is treated with profundity and sublimity which will give the poem universal appreciation. Other briefer lyrics in this volume have the same perfection if not the same grand theme. The last volume seems almost miraculously perfect. It followed, strangely enough, upon "Trivial Breath," a book containing the most artificial group of poems Mrs. Wylie ever wrote. When "Trivial Breath" was published, it looked as if this poet's end was to be in highly mannered and empty verse. But only a little later we had "Angels and Earthly Creatures," a collection sent to the publishers on the day of the night in which the poet herself died. Here all prophecies of the dangers implicit in Elinor Wylie's method proved false. The method became the humble tool toward the expression of profound feeling, never once in the way, never returning to overelaboration or prettiness—just the perfected language and imagery fused now with intense feeling and communicating that feeling without a flaw.

And so the work of Elinor Wylie was complete:

Farewell, sweet dust; I was never a miser:
Once, for a minute, I made you mine:
Now you are gone, I am none the wiser
But the leaves of the willow are bright as wine.

William Rose Benét's introduction to his wife's book is as fine and sensitive a piece of writing, in its way, as are her poems. So difficult a task is seldom accomplished so perfectly.

EDA LOU WALTON

In Defense of Hoover

The Truth About Hoover. By Herbert Corey. Houghton Mifflin Company. $2.50.

AT last a book has appeared which attempts to answer the sensational charges which have been brought against President Hoover by a number of authors in recent months. The need for such a defense has long been evident. While most of the accusations were obviously prompted by malice, certain of the books, notably Mr. Liggett's, gave the impression of being substantially true, and all of them raised points which every conscientious voter must desire to see cleared up before next November. Fairness demands that Mr. Hoover's side be adequately presented to the public.

Mr. Corey takes up his task with commendable zeal. We are assured that "the President of the United States does not stand in need of any defense . . . and yet . . . no President, with the exception of Washington and Lincoln, was ever so persistently or untruthfully maligned." But if the author honestly desires to clear the President of the serious allegations made against him, the strategy which he has adopted is incredibly faulty. Most of the first seven chapters are devoted to extravagant and wholly uncritical praise of Mr. Hoover's achievements as President. On the very first page, for example, we are told that "in 1932 Herbert Hoover . . . saved the world from a panic which might have been more devastating than any that has ever been imagined in modern times," and on the third page we find the somewhat more modest statement that in 1919 he "saved Europe from going wholly to pieces."

It is strongly intimated that Mr. Hoover was one of the few men who accurately foresaw the present economic debacle, and that he alone "knew what should be done and dared to take the responsibility of doing it." To buttress this view, quotations are made from a speech delivered in January, 1925, in which Secretary Hoover warned against "waste from the speculation, relaxation of effort, and extravagance of booms." It is unnecessary to add, however, that no reference is made to his now famous utterance, made when accepting the Republican nomination in 1928, that "given the chance to go forward with the policies of the last eight years . . . we shall soon with the help of God be in sight of the day when poverty will be banished from this nation."

The devices used to divert attention from the failure of the present Republican Administration to fulfil the foregoing prediction are so specious that no one will be deceived. We are informed that "previous Presidents . . . when anything happened to their people . . . have stood on the White House steps and mourned mellifluously. But Hoover fought it [the depression] from the first. . . . By cushioning the shock he was enabled to preserve social order." Every act of the President's, including many attributed to him which undoubtedly originated elsewhere, is lauded to the skies as a stroke of genius. When the Democrats agree to cooperate with the Administration, it is hailed as a proof of Mr. Hoover's inspired leadership; when they do not cooperate, it is because they are dishonorably trying to "smear Hoover." If economic conditions have not been as bad as they might have been, the President is given full credit for averting a catastrophe; but the depression itself, with its eight or ten million unemployed, is attributed to outside forces which no man could be expected to control. His infrequent actions, such as the "Hoover" moratorium, are cited as evidence of courageous leadership; while the long periods of inaction are justified upon the theory that "a depression is like a fever. It must run its course."

Having thoroughly silenced the critics of the present Administration, Mr. Corey proceeds to discredit the writers who have presented Mr. Hoover's early record in an unfavorable light. Hamill is represented as an Englishman who "is distinguished by his indifference to linen"; Clement Wood is alleged to have stolen his material directly from Hamill; while it is rumored that Knox (alias Thomas J. Dockerty) was "vaguely intimate" with the "advocates of bigger battleships." Worst of all, Liggett is revealed as having been on the Soviet pay roll.

There is doubtless much truth in the author's indignant refutation of the sweeping accusations of Messrs. Hamill, O'Brien, and Wood. But it is greatly to be feared that no one will believe him, for his ill-concealed partisanship is likely to react against Mr. Hoover far more than the "scurrilous" attacks of others. Moreover, Mr. Corey's style and technique work against him. The impression is created that he is seeking to win his argument by hurling epithets and shouting louder than his opponents. Perhaps this might be forgiven him if he gave us an accurate picture of Mr. Hoover's activities in connection with the wresting of the Kaiping mines from China by Bewick, Moreing and Company, the facts of which are available to anyone. Instead, he relies upon the defense given by Mr. Train, which absolves Hoover on the ground that he was merely an intermediary who was called upon as a witness in the lawsuit which developed. Space will not permit going into details here, but a careful reading of the record will convince anyone (1) that Hoover played a crucial role in the affair, (2) that certain of his activities were roundly denounced by Justice Joyce in his emphatic decision against Bewick, Moreing and Company—of which Hoover was a partner—and (3) that Hoover went to the lengths he did because he was assured that he would not share in the pie unless he agreed to play the game.

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For the rest, each reader will have to decide for himself on the face of the evidence. It is possible that by the standards of his day Hoover's activities as a promoter and financier were no worse than those of many other men. Whether they were or not is relatively unimportant. The essential point seems to be that throughout his entire life Mr. Hoover has not only accepted current business ethics and practices without protest, but that he has sought to sanctify them as the proper basis for American civilization. MAXWELL S. STEWART

Disposing of the *Zeitgeist*

Fear and Trembling. By Glenway Wescott. Harper and Brothers. $3.50.

"THE world's case is grave," Mr. Wescott finds. The "troubled record" it has caused him to write is singularly hard to describe. Is it a treatise on the Situation in General? Is it the travel-diary of a motor trip with three friends through Central Europe? Is it a plea against the next war, or against "half-heartedness," or for our participation in the League of Nations? Is it a move toward capitalistic counter-reformation, seeking to check communism by proposing more cultured philanthropy to our millionaires? On the whole, I think the best word for it is "conversation," for the emphasis, plainly, is not on the subject but on the speaker. Mr. Wescott puts on his salon manner and considers the *Zeitgeist;* in a word, he holds forth. As a monologue his book is an astonishing tour de force. Written in less than five months and quite long, touching on every conceivable topic and sparkling all the way, it reveals a prodigious virtuosity. If Mr. Wescott's talents have ever been in question they will have to be conceded now.

We are never so aware of a talent, unfortunately, as when it has been misapplied. Long before the end of "Fear and Trembling" we realize that Mr. Wescott made a blunder when he essayed "the thinker's task." If our criticism could boast an Old Guard in touch with current affairs, some testy dogmatist might rule: "This person is posing as a Continental man of letters. Jerk off his cape and you will find a tender American poet who should be spanked for his affectations."

> . . . the rich possessors of our country and our part of the world must now face . . . the semi-Oriental belief in not-possessing: blessed be nothing and blessed be everyone, only everyone. The better practice of luxury by a few persons on a larger scale, even wild palaces and immoral parks and superfluous churches, would fortify the West's principle of ownership, as in the past, refresh its cunning, sharpen its conscience, as is needful. . . . Even in America some renewed faith in wealth is badly needed. Frantic money-making without a thought of what can and should be done with it; the piling up of abstract millions because it is easy . . . no real belief in money is involved in all this. Mammon is a god like any other, and worship of it without reverence or even respect, a daily black mass in its honor, is not only odious but dangerous. Think how one looks down upon a priest who takes his vows without faith in them, just because the church can provide him with creature comforts and a way of passing his time of life that suits him; what is of more importance, think how badly, in certain crises, such a priest would do his divine duties; how quickly and heavily, with too many like him in its bosom, the church would fall.

This is not thinking, this is blowing bubbles. The sense of reality is far away. Actualities are not wrestled with; the dummies of a pampered, capricious fancy are set up and pushed over. The curious last sentence quoted above is a sample of the wholly ornamental digressions which must form a good third of the text.

Mr. Wescott is the author of "The Grandmothers," a novel of many genuine beauties. For several years he has lived abroad. Unlike most other literary expatriates, he appears to have been attracted, not to Anglicanism or to super-realism, but to what might be called the mainstream of Continental culture, to writers like Goethe, Tolstoy, André Gide, Thomas Mann, and to the finest masters in other arts. In considering "Fear and Trembling" we must recall the special temptations which lie in wait for every young American talent, whether at home or abroad; and hope that too much significance will not be attached to this particular indiscretion. It is bound, nevertheless, to make the discerning reader worry. Mr. Wescott has used his culture not to enrich his understanding but to embellish a drawing-room brilliance. His inherent tendency to play the exquisite, hitherto bridled by the severity of his Wisconsin subject matter, in one leap has neared the point of eccentricity. There is hardly a page in "Fear and Trembling" where his naturally acute intuition and sweet sensibility have not been compromised by preciousness and inadvertent frivolity.

GERALD SYKES

Central America in Color

Banana Gold. By Carleton Beals. Illustrated by Carlos Mérida. J. B. Lippincott Company. $3.

CARLETON BEALS has at least two talents which make him a good reporter: he can describe a scene so as to recreate it before the mind's eye of the reader, and he does not allow his sympathies to warp his judgments unduly. The second of these talents strikes one especially in this volume because of a tendency in some recent writings on Mexico and Central America to dwell on the virtues of primitive arts and culture while ignoring the ugliness and squalor that live cheek by jowl with them. Mr. Beals is known as a friend of the Latin Americans, but he is by no means always eulogistic. Both his talent for candid criticism and his faculty for living description are revealed in writing of the restaurant at Tierra Blanca, Mexico, where he stopped on a trip to Central America. On the walls of the room hung gilt-frame enlargements of family ancestors, a copy of Millet's The Reapers, and some cheap color-print landscapes, including a Swiss lake in a bamboo frame. "In the deep garden grinned a caged monkey; turkey cocks gobbled; and a straw-tinted dog, whose color had run slightly in the rain, bit his fleas."

The book tells of two journeys into Central America, the second undertaken a few years ago in behalf of *The Nation* to visit Sandino, then conducting an active snipers' war against United States marines in Nicaragua. Mr. Beals approached the camp of Sandino from Honduras, bearing letters of introduction. Ingeniously, he decided that the way to make these letters least likely to be read or confiscated en route was to carry them in an envelope closed with red seals—stamped with a twenty-dollar gold piece—and addressed "His Excellency, Minister Arthur Summerlin, Tegucigalpa, Honduras." This visit to Sandino required resourcefulness and courage, and the account of it constitutes the kernel of the volume, a book giving one many rich glimpses into the old-new civilization of Central America.

The title of the volume is fanciful, and one who looks for an account of the great banana empire will not find it. There is only an occasional allusion to the fronds of green and yellow gold which are so important a commercial asset of the region. In Puerto Barrios, Guatemala, for instance, Mr. Beals notes that "Baron Banana rules supreme," while the city is summed up succintly as "an achievement in ugliness in a natural setting of beauty."

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Mr. Beals's gifts as a word painter and candid critic make one sorry for one jarring note in the book—the author's smart remarks to various persons with whom he had unpleasant encounters. Granting that the sallies were made as recorded—some of them sound like the clever sayings one thinks of on the way home from the party—they were doubtless justifiable shots at obnoxious persons. But why should they be inflicted on the unoffending Gentle Reader?

Illustrations by Carlos Mérida add a decorative and fanciful touch to the volume.

ARTHUR WARNER

Was Shakespeare a Poet?

The Essential Shakespeare. By J. Dover Wilson. The Macmillan Company. $1.50.

J. DOVER WILSON is coeditor with Quiller-Couch of "The New Shakespeare." A previous little book won the admiration of all those who are interested in sober, informed speculation about Shakespeare, and the present 150 pages will add to that admiration. Here Mr. Wilson is concerned with "the kind of man I believe Shakespeare to have been," and he sets out very convincingly to modify the current but excessively commonplace portrait which resulted from the work of the scholars who revolted against earlier romantic tendencies. Short as his book is, I fancy that it may well mark a turning-point and begin the process of building up a new conception of Shakespeare's character inherently more convincing than that of the Stratford parvenu which is at present the official one.

Sidney Lee concludes that Shakespeare's "literary attainments and success were chiefly valued as serving the prosaic end of making permanent provision for himself and his daughters." That view of his interests is, as Mr. Wilson points out, the culmination of a tendency which goes as far back as Halliwell-Phillipps, but it is also, as he points out still further, neither inherently probable nor necessarily to be deduced from the meager facts and supposed facts upon which it is allegedly founded. In the first place, Shakespeare's father was a prosperous and prominent man in Stratford. There is not the slightest evidence that Shakespeare attended the local grammar school, and the obvious cultivation of his mind suggests that he may have—as is not in itself unlikely—been brought up in the house of some great gentleman. In the second place, the picture of the dramatist as a man writing for the vulgar mob and associating chiefly with the rabble is wholly unwarranted. We know nothing of the steps by which he rose, but when he first emerges he is already both famous and the protege of Southampton, who, as a friend of Essex, was very close to royal favor. Moreover, since the public theaters were tolerated chiefly as institutions for the development of plays later presented at court, there is every reason to suppose that Shakespeare wrote with an audience of cultivated people chiefly in view.

With these facts in mind, Mr. Wilson offers some fresh suggestions as to the interpretation of the plays themselves. "Love's Labor's Lost," "The Two Gentlemen of Verona," "The Comedy of Errors," "The Taming of the Shrew," "The Merchant of Venice," and "Romeo and Juliet" all belong to about the same period, and all present a group of gay young bachelors—four of them in the first play, and three in all the rest. Mr. Wilson suggests that these be identified as the Earls of Derby, Essex, Southampton, and Rutland, all of whom were friends, and the death of the first in 1594 would explain why he appears in only the first of the series. After making these identifications seem at least not improbable, Mr. Wilson goes on to suggest a fresh view of the famous "three periods." He connects the beginning of the tragic period with the deaths of Essex and

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the Queen, and the development of the somber corruption characteristic of the court atmosphere after the ascension of James. The latter, as he says, "made short work of the 'spaciousness' of the old days," and Shakespeare did not recover his serenity until he began to return to Stratford where, as Wordsworth was later to do with scenes reminiscent of his boyhood, he re-established contact with the peaceful nature which had originally formed his spirit.

These detailed identifications and this interpretation are, as Mr. Wilson himself confesses, no more than possible and reasonable. Considered by themselves they seem probable enough, though not, perhaps, more reasonable than other identifications and other interpretations seem when taken by themselves. A good deal more, however, can be said for his main contention that the official view of Shakespeare's character fits the bungling bust of the Stratford church much better than it fits the author of plays. It is all very well to say that that view is founded upon the only documentary evidence we have, but the deeds, wills, etc., are not only very slight but, of necessity, throw light on nothing except Shakespeare's practical affairs, and it is a strange sort of court which would refuse to acknowledge that "Romeo and Juliet," "Hamlet," and "The Tempest" are also evidence of what kind of man their author was. They certainly prove that he was a poet, and though poets may be many different kinds of men, there is one kind of man they cannot be. Shakespeare may not have been reckless, erratic, unpractical, or even "sensitive," but he certainly cared for something besides money and ease.

JOSEPH WOOD KRUTCH

The Poetry of Living

Dorothy Wordsworth. By Catherine Macdonald Maclean. The Viking Press. $5.

THIS is a very curious book. In a sense it is not written at all; it reads like a child's copybook: "William did this; then we did that; then we had a visitor; then William went for a walk." Yet so cunningly has Miss Maclean arranged her material, so deftly has she concealed her various sources, that her narrative reads singly and as a whole, and builds up into a lovely and affecting picture.

It is a picture of self-sacrifice, of a life lived for others, but without a trace of martyrdom. Dorothy, sister of the poet William Wordsworth, was compounded of balm and quicksilver. Herself volatile, energetic, sensitive, she quieted her own insecurities to soothe others. As a child she thought constantly of the day when she should make a home for William and herself; as a woman she spent years nursing William's children—while those children were small there was always one who slept in his Aunt Dorothy's bed; for a short while between, when, living with William in Alfoxden, the two of them were constantly associated with Coleridge, "gold dust of poetry rained from heaven upon them all." During those short happy years, when probably Dorothy was in love with both William and Coleridge, and each of the men was somehow in love with her, the poets wrote their finest poems, and the sister, poet at living, provided the inspiration. One uses trite phrases like these with some hesitation. Yet they were never more true or more justified. The three of them took long walks together, they sat up long late hours, talking, talking poetry, hearing poetry, speaking poetry. Around them the world went on, and they were occasionally aware of it. They saw Charles and Mary Lamb, the Southeys, poor complaining Mrs. Coleridge, Coleridge's child Hartley, Mary Hutchinson whom Wordsworth was presently to marry, Sara Hutchinson whom Coleridge was finally to love. But essentially the world belonged to those

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three alone; others were extraneous, and broke, not unpleasantly but nevertheless quite clearly, upon their trinity.

One turns with some reluctance from the felicity of these months to the long years that Dorothy spent in her brother's house after his marriage. She was housekeeper, amanuensis, nurse, sister, companion; her sister-in-law evidently loved her; her nephews and nieces took her for a second mother; her brother found her indispensable. The cottage at Grasmere which Wordsworth admirers today visit to sigh and dream over was Dorothy's creation; the worn furniture, polished and bright, the deep gardens, the luxuriant climbing roses, the broom she had planted herself and whose yellow flowers she waited for—all were the work of her competent hands and her loving heart. She was the genius of the home; her bright, quick eye, her darting movements, her unfailing willing temper were always in demand and always bestowed in fullest measure. No woman was ever less niggardly of her time, her strength, and her love. Nor can one regret that she spent them for others than herself, for she regretted it so little.

Miss Maclean has drawn this picture of Dorothy Wordsworth with great sympathy and skill. And next to Dorothy, Coleridge stands out most tellingly. He was a genius; and the world revolved around him at its center. For years he counted the Wordsworths his closest friends, yet he allowed himself to be estranged from them for the most trivial of reasons. When they knew him first, they saw his "angel brow and eyes," his "face full of light." They saw him in later years fat, ill, the victim of a thousand intemperances, not the least of which was his own vanity. De Quincey, too, quiet, helpful, Wordsworth's constant admirer, is clear in Miss Maclean's pages, as are half a dozen others. But the book is rightly Dorothy's, and only through her does it belong to any of the others.

DOROTHY VAN DOREN

Notes on Fiction

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Storm. By Peter Neagoe. With an Introductory Letter by Eugene Jolas. Paris: New Review Publications. 90 cents.

If other evidence were lacking, this volume of short stories would be enough to demonstrate that our literary expatriates in Paris, who a few years ago were considered revolutionary, have now created a cliché. The book is written by a Rumanian who came to America "when most writers have already found their linguistic mechanics," and who now, apparently, lives in Paris. Despite the novelty of most of its subject matter, peasant life, which is interesting enough by itself, "Storm" adheres so faithfully to advance-guard patterns and credos that it never

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fails to be thoroughly familiar and predictable. Mr. Jolas tells Mr. Neagoe in his letter that he knows "few modern writers in the English language in whose work there is such a complete balance between a sincere telluric sense and its expression."

A Lesson in Love. By Colette. Translated by Rosemary Benét. Farrar and Rinehart. $2.50.

Colette in this novel goes over again, in the first person, a good deal of the ground covered in the first part of "Recaptured," indulging in continual descriptions of the weather's state and its relation to her successful attempt to renounce love. The letters of her dead mother, who is the muse invoked to sing of a very lush autumn, are quite remarkable, whether they are actual letters or not. Somehow, the whole procedure fails to come off properly.

Drama

Another Boy Goes Wrong

"A THOUSAND SUMMERS" is the name of the comedy-drama which Jane Cowl has chosen for her tardy appearance at the Selwyn Theater. A not-much-varied variation on the theme of the innocent youth and the experienced woman, it has already been accorded some tepid admiration, but I confess that I found it difficult to be much interested in a drama so conventional and so routine.

In the first place, I was ready, before the play began, to agree with its thesis. I had long ago been convinced that youth is a difficult time, and I was prepared to grant that a young man who is obviously destined to some kind of sexual experience had much better "learn about women" from a nice one than share his first apple with a cruder companion. Like, I am sure, most of the other members of the audience, I saw what a mistake his careful guardians were making when they interfered with his romantic attachment for a woman of the world, and I had noted with foreboding the presence of an all-too-willing but all-too-undesirable chambermaid. I might even have predicted that the young man in question would spend a despairing night in rowing away his disgust on a convenient lake after the inevitable had taken place, for that, or its equivalent, is exactly what innumerable young men—in fiction, at least—have done during the last twenty-five or thirty years. But though the thesis is sound enough, it is likely to seem, when presented with such insistent unction, more than a little mawkish. Granted that a decent young man may be expected to recover from a romantic calf love, isn't he almost as sure to recover from an unworthy one, and is not, after all, the author of the play making as much too much a fuss over the chambermaid as the guardians were making over the woman of the world? "Liberal" prigs are almost as common as prudish ones, and the author of "A Thousand Summers" comes clearly under suspicion.

In the second place, the play seldom deviates from the clichés of characterization or construction. Just a few weeks ago I had occasion to remark how another play, very similar in its central situation, was redeemed by the lifelikeness and particularity of its characters; but everyone in the present drama is straight out of other plays. One feels that at any moment the heroine is likely to say that she is determined "to get away from it all," and though she does not actually say that, she is "tired of the *way* we live" and she has run away to the country "to think things over." Moreover, the management of the scenes is as conventional as the dialogue. Every development is planned for by obvious plants which seem to have been

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arranged according to the rules in some textbook of dramaturgy. Every so often one is reminded, with the regularity of a clock, that the chambermaid is on the loose. With equal regularity some hint of the heroine's past puts in its appearance, and when the time has come around for a bit of wisdom in comic dialect, the proprietress of the inn supplies it while—believe it or not—*she is dusting the furniture.* In short, "A Thousand Summers" reminds one of so many different plays that it rarely succeeds in suggesting anything else—least of all "life."

Osgood Perkins is responsible for the one really amusing scene—that in which he quarrels with his mistress. Franchot Tone is also excellent as the boy, and Miss Cowl plays her very conventional role both with seriousness and with a minimum of that self-consciousness of stardom which has been her bane. Somehow or other she has managed to get rid of the one stereotyped gesture of the hand which used to be her signature, but she still has an annoying habit of giggling her own appreciation at the end of every cute or witty line which the playwright has been good enough to give her. Even if she had thought of these things herself, even if it were her own exploring thumb which had discovered the plum, it would be nicer of her not to say with such obvious self-satisfaction, "What a bright girl am I!"

JOSEPH WOOD KRUTCH

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